MOTHER MARY BAPTIST RUSSELL

REV. MATTHEW RUSSELL S.J.



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MOTHER MARY BAPTIST RUSSELL, ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL,
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA.

THE LIFE

OF

Mother Mary Baptist Russell

SISTER OF MERCY

BY HER BROTHER

THE REVEREND

Matthew Russell, S. J.

NEW YORK
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PREFACE.

ONE of the witnesses cited in the following pages deposes to the fact that once, in speaking of the subject of this sketch to a lay sister at Newry, I said: "Perhaps I may write a book about her some day." And now after thirty years the prophecy is fulfilled.

I have described Mother Baptist's life in a very unconventional manner, piecing together all the testimonies I could gather as to her work and character and conduct. Those who knew her complain—for they have read this account as it appeared by instalments in the American *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*—they from their riper knowledge complain that what is here set down gives a very inadequate idea of a noble woman who did a noble work. Part of the blame may fall on the fact that, during most of the period covered by our narrative, the annalist of the San Francisco Sisters of Mercy was Mother Baptist herself, who took good care that her personal share of the work should be ignored in the official record. Even this imperfect sketch, however, will help its readers to realize the position she

occupied in the esteem of the outer world and in the hearts of her own little kingdom ; and they will probably conclude that she was indeed a "valiant woman" of exceptional natural and supernatural gifts, who performed with great perfection the task assigned to her by God, and who was manifestly equal to much greater toils and greater sacrifices if God had asked them from her.

I have drawn largely from the letters that were placed at my disposal; but if I had been able to study them more carefully, I might have enlarged and yet condensed my sketch. For instance towards the beginning, here is a characteristic little glimpse of a child seven or eight years old. "Miss Cunningham and I were confirmed the same day, and I can distinctly remember, on the day we were examined by Dr. Blake of blessed memory, that she was crying with fright and I was quite at my ease and wondering at her tears."

The editor of the *Messenger* thought it better to omit in a Jesuit periodical several passages which expressed Mother Baptist's gratitude to certain Fathers of the Society for their goodness to her and her veneration for the Order. One of her Nuns mentions that, when she playfully told Mother Baptist that, if she had been a man, she would have been

a distinguished lawyer like her well-known brother, she smiled and said, "No, I should have been a Jesuit."

This allusion to her brother affords an excuse for inserting here a belated extract from one o Mother Baptist's letters. After speaking of a cousin of the same name who had just died, she goes on : " Our own dear Charles seems to prosper in every way. I only hope God is not allowing more success than is good for his eternal interests. His ' Woes to the Rich ' are frightful. As charity is one of the chief means of turning riches to good account for hereafter, I must [then she suggests certain charitable works.] I must also find out if he has sent a piano I asked him to send to our poor Sisters in a very poor place in England." This last sentence speaks well for both brother and sister. It is harder to ask another to do a charitable deed of that sort than it would be to do it oneself if it were in one's power.

This sister and brother, who have many points of resemblance in character, died in the same month of August, two years apart. It was Lord Russell of Killowen who, to my surprise, suggested that our sister's life ought to be written. This attempt at fulfilment of his wish is now dedicated affectionately to his memory. May they both rest in peace.

M. R.

MARY BAPTIST RUSSELL

Pioneer Sister of Mercy in California.

"A woman," answered Percivale, "a nun,
And one no further off in blood from me
Than sister; and if ever holy maid
With knees of adoration wore the stone,
A holy maid." —*Tennyson.*

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE IN KILLOWEN.

IN the first week of August, 1898, the three or four principal newspapers of San Francisco, even in the midst of the excitement of the Cuban War, devoted long columns for several days to minute accounts of the illness and death, and then the life of the Superior of the Sisters of Mercy in that city, of which she was perhaps the oldest inhabitant or at least the earliest of surviving residents. These secular journalists did not allow a career of great public utility and great private holiness to come to an end unnoticed; but those for whom Mother Baptist Russell was more than a remarkable woman have thought that some fuller and more permanent record should be made of her works and her virtues. As a beginning, the present sketch was attempted; and it was published in a magazine in that mighty country to which forty-four out of her sixty-nine years were devoted.

Katherine Russell was the third child of Arthur, son of Charles Russell of Killough, and Margaret,

daughter of Matthew Mullan, of Belfast. Killough is a small seaport and fishing station in the north of County Down, five miles southeast of St. Patrick's grave at Downpatrick. In that good barony of Lecale the Russells had planted themselves in the thirteenth century, and they are there still. At the change of religion under Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn these Celtic Normans did not change, but kept the Faith through all the penal days. There is at present at Killough a chalice with this inscription: "Presented by George Russell and his wife, Mary Taaffe, to the church of Rathmolin, 1640." This George Russell was a member of the Catholic Confederation of Kilkenny and was killed in the battle of Tircroghan, fighting of course on the Irish side.

Arthur Russell's children, however, were not born at Killough, for he had meanwhile migrated from the north to the south of County Down. He himself was born at Killough on the 9th of July, 1785. There were not many openings for Catholic lads in those days, and Arthur Russell joined the merchant service, persevering long enough to become captain of a ship of his own, trading chiefly with Norway. But before his marriage (January 17, 1825) — perhaps with a view to it, modifying the old sophism *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*—he had given up the sea and purchased the Southwark brewery at Newry.[1]

Newry was at that time a rival to Belfast. Though it has since been left far behind by the northern capital, it was then perhaps more than its equal in com-

[1] In John Rocque's map in 1760 the present Queen Street is called "Ballybot, otherwise Southwark."

mercial advantages; and it had certainly a greater number of Catholic inhabitants and of priests. A few years earlier, the year that Arthur Russell's younger brother Charles (who was afterwards to be the President of Maynooth) was born — 1812 — the Rev. Wm. Crolly, afterwards Primate, had charge of Belfast parish, thirty miles long, with only one curate and one small chapel in a mean back-lane of Belfast, capable of holding only about one hundred and fifty worshippers. The priests and churches within that district may now be counted by the hundred. Newry on the other hand was then and always the residence of the Bishop of Dromore, whose Cathedral, however, was only what is now called affectionately "The Old Chapel" — the first stone of the present beautiful church of St. Patrick being laid in the very year of the marriage just referred to — the year of the jubilee to which Leo XIII. has alluded so touchingly in announcing the Jubilee for the end of the century.[1]

Many years later, whenever a certain junior member of that Newry household heard the bell of the Protestant church booming across the Glanrye through the hush of the Sunday noon, he felt it as a sort of symbol of Protestant ascendancy, never dreaming that it would be drowned as it is now by the magnificent peal of the Catholic Cathedral that makes itself heard at Bessbrook three miles away.

Newry is very beautifully situated in the valley

[1] Father Felix McLaughlin, P.P., Donoughmore near Newry, who was born in 1825, tells me that year was called "The Year of the Short Corn" and that the Protestants laid the blame of the bad harvest upon the jubilee. The corn was so short that it could not be reaped, but was pulled like flax.

(or, as it is called locally, the Low Ground) through which the Glanrye, more generally known as the Newry river, after a short winding course flows into Carlingford Bay—in that valley and on the hills that rise on either side. In this frontier town of the North, as Newry is fond of calling itself, Katherine Russell, the subject of this sketch, was born on the 18th of April, 1829. The long fight for Catholic Emancipation had just been won by the passing of the Catholic Relief Bill on the fifth of that very month; and, when the baby was brought to her mother, she cried over her, calling her her first free-born child. Two sisters had preceded her, Mary and Elizabeth; and her immediate successor in the nursery (to the disgust of the eldest sister who complained that there were already enough of them)[1] was another sister, Sarah, who was followed by two brothers. Of these last the elder was to be afterwards well-known as Sir Charles Russell, Gladstone's last Attorney-General in England—the first Catholic to hold that position since the Reformation. It is unnecessary to add, even on the other side of the Atlantic, that he is now Lord Russell of Killowen, Chief Justice of England.

The name that we have just mentioned will perhaps justify us in giving some particulars more minute than a sketch like this might seem to call for. For instance, in the innumerable biographical notices that have been

[1] There is something pathetic in the grave authority for this not very important statement. Dr. Russell, towards the end of his theological studies and not yet a priest or professor, wrote at the time in a letter that has chanced to survive all these years: "I fully agree with poor little Mary that there were quite enough of them."



SUGAR ISLAND BRIDGE, TAYLOR HILL, NEWRY.



IN THE LARGEST OF THESE THREE HOUSES THE CHILDREN OF ARTHUR AND MARGARET RUSSELL WERE BORN.

furnished of Mother Baptist's eldest brother by various magazines and newspapers, he is sometimes called a native of County Down and sometimes of County Armagh. Newry is the chief town of the former county, which at this point is separated from the County Armagh by the river Glanrye. Mr. Arthur Russell's house stood (and stands) on the Armagh side of the river. The new Local Government Act has just made this district for the first time a part of County Down ; so that it is only now that the present writer has a legal claim to the title he has usurped all his lifetime—he is now at last a County Down man.

It may be recorded also that the welcome "son and heir" was the first of the children born in the roomy, substantial house which Arthur Russell built for himself and which is still as fresh and hale as it was seventy years ago. It is now No. 50 Queen Street. He built also the two adjoining houses, pulling down the smaller house, in the gardens behind, which he had previously occupied and in which Katherine Russell and her three sisters were born.

For the sake of a very interesting name that is mixed with the reminiscence, we may mention that one of Mr. Russell's tenants, the occupant of the middle house of the three, was Captain Verner, brother of Sir William Verner, Bart., then a strong pillar of the Orange party ; and that at the same time the chief Newry attorney, Sam Frazer, had a clever young apprentice called John Mitchel, son of a Unitarian minister in the town. The Mitchels lived not far away in Dromalane, which is a continuation of Queen street to the country—in the same house to which, by an extraordinary combination of circumstances, the author of *The Jail Journal* was,

after many vicissitudes and twenty-seven years of imprisonment and exile, to return at last to die, March 20, 1875.[1]

Not his death, however, but his marriage connects John Mitchel with the birthplace of Mother Baptist Russell; for her next-door neighbor, Jane Verner, a schoolgirl of seventeen summers, in 1837, married against her father's will young Mitchel, who was barely of age and still in his apprenticeship. Thank God, several of their children became Catholics, with the full consent of their gifted father, who had always high principles and generous sentiments. He was a staunch defender of the Pope. Judge O'Hagan, who was at this time a boy in Newry also, told me that Michael had often implied that he would become a Catholic if he could but pray.

Like this remarkable man who stole his youthful bride almost from the home that we have described, Kate Russell, the little girl whom John Mitchel must have often met in his walks in that direction, was destined also to make her way to the United States, through less stirring vicissitudes, however, and not *via* Kilmainham and Tasmania. She was a sensible, healthy child, not unpleasantly precocious, but very bright and good. "The child is father to the man," is, perhaps, more fully verified when the sex is

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[1] This house, in which by another curious chance, honest John Martin also died a week after his friend, was afterward enlarged and beautified as the home of an eminently useful and worthy citizen of Newry, Thomas D'Arcy Hoey, whose brother, John Cashel Hoey, was Sir Charles Gavan Duffy's coadjutor and then successor as editor of *The Nation*, and afterward Dr. W. G. Ward's literary editor of *The Dublin Review*.

changed. At an unusually early age Kate was presented for the sacrament of Confirmation to the new Bishop, Dr. Michael Blake. Though then at the beginning only of his Episcopal career of twenty-seven years, he was already very old and venerable looking, and he was always exact and somewhat austere; but the youthful candidate, nothing daunted, complained only of the easiness of the test to which she was subjected by him, and begged of his Lordship to propose some of the harder questions further on in the Catechism. She had still to wait some years before she was allowed to make her First Communion, which she received in the old chapel of Killowen in the year 1841, on the same day that the oldest of her brothers was confirmed. Dr. Blake reserved to himself the sacred and consoling duty of administering both these sacraments to the lambs of his flock. The notes I am here following state that that was the only year the "old Bishop," as he was already called twenty years before his death, came to Killowen for this purpose; all the other years the Killowen boys and girls had to make their way to Rostrevor.

But our narrative has not reached its Killowen stage. Between Katherine Russell's Confirmation in Newry and her First Communion in Killowen many things occurred. Her father's health gave way; the brewery was leased to the firm of Carroll & D'Arcy; and it was decided to seek a warmer climate in France, where the two elder girls would have special advantages for their education. These plans were upset by the sudden illness of the eldest, Mary. She died of fever in her thirteenth year, on the 28th day of June, 1838, the day of Queen Victoria's coronation. The

town was illuminated that night, and, as the house which the little corpse sanctified was in darkness, two young men stood outside to explain the cause to any loyal passerby who might be scandalized.

This sorrow altered the arrangements, and the thought of going to France was given up.

While endeavoring to procure a small farm that might furnish some occupation and interest to the gentle paterfamilias, the family pitched their tents for some months at Rostrevor in a quaint old "bow-window" house which disappeared long ago, the site being at present occupied by the Presbyterian church, on your right, as, coming from Warrenpoint, you approach the rising ground on which Rostrevor stands. That was the roof that sheltered the young folk in whom we are interested on "The Night of the Big Wind," as the people still call the terrific storm that raged over Ireland and England on the 6th of January, 1839. This hurricane prostrated giants by the hundred all round leafy Rostrevor; and trees that had been the victims of its fury afforded delightful rides on their huge branches to a set of merry children for months afterwards, when early in the new year they finally settled down at Seafield in Killowen.

But it seems that there are at least four Killowens in Ireland — in Cork, in Wexford, in Derry, and in Down. This last is of course the Killowen of Killowens, some ten miles to the east of Newry and separated from Rostrevor by a mile of delightful roadway, where the trees of Rostrevor Wood arch over your head and the waters of Carlingford Bay sparkle down below you, almost within a stone's throw. About two miles further on, removed from the high



WARRENPOINT, MIDWAY BETWEEN NEWRY AND KILLOWEN.



SEAFIELD, KILLOWEN.

road to Kilkeel and Newcastle by two or three fields, and with another couple of fields between it and the beach stands the snug dwelling that was to be Katherine Russell's home during all the remaining years of what she called her life in the world.

Not that Killowen was by any means a discovery reserved for the year that began with the Big Wind. For many years before, as soon as the hot months began, the Newry children had made their way eagerly to their simple seaside home in that summer haunt of their predilection—generally Nelly Crilly's roomy, substantial cottage that faces you at that corner where the road divides into two—the upper road toiling up Gilmore's Hill, long and steep; the lower road keeping to the level ground nearer to the sea, round by Killowen Point. They were therefore, used to the Killowen air during many long sunny summers before they came to live there, winter and summer.

Seafield, with its compact little territory of sixteen acres stretching down to the shore, was an old-fashioned, comfortable house lying in the shelter of a short range of the Mourne Mountains, between Slieve Ban and Croagh Shee, and looking over the Lough to the old historic town of Carlingford, which, with its King John's Castle, was distinctly visible from the door across some two miles of waves. A wing was added for its new inmates, and a pleasant porch, which has since disappeared, along with the gravelled sweep in front, the careful raking of which was one of the Saturday evening sounds in preparation for the holy silence of a rural Sunday.

The old chapel, which was never known by the name of any patron saint, was within a short half-

hour's walk, and for some years to come it was, summer after summer, the scene of Confirmation or First Communion of one or other of the younger members of the household, beginning, as we have before said, with her for whose sake these old times and places are recalled. Some twenty years later it was the scene of the Yelverton marriage, which became the subject of one of the *causes célèbres* of the century. There was one great bond of union between these newcomers and the people of the place. They were all Catholics—not more than one or two Protestant families in the whole half-parish. A great many years after, the youngest of the Seafield family, in the pulpit of the Rostrevor church, drawing, as he confessed, upon his memory rather than on his fancy, described a species of poverty which is blessed by God. This was (he said) "the poverty which does not condemn to idleness and despair, and crime, but only to unceasing labor and many privations endured with resignation—the poverty that is able and willing to accept that condition which for fallen man is not a curse so much as a punishment, nay, almost a blessing: 'In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat thy bread'—out in the fields, under God's sunshine and God's rain, and in the simple homesteads, where constant, cheerful toil, where honest Christian pride, where the attachments of race and home are powerful allies with religion and all her sacramental and unsacramental graces in enabling so many to practise great virtues, almost without knowing them to be virtues,—where half a parish is but as one family, all taking an interest in each other's fortunes, all taking shame in each other's faults, and thus making human

respect (so often an incentive to evil) the check of passion and the safeguard of all good—where enmities and scandals are as utterly unknown as crime,—where the unvarying round of duties discharged day by day, year after year, hardly leaving space for he simplest pleasures, makes of the blessed Sunday a true and a doubly welcome day of rest—where the salutary ordinances of the Church are observed with filial docility, the plain homelike chapel crowded every Sunday, and then on the great Feasts, so many gathered round the Communion-rails, though all this does not imply merely a few minutes' walk to a street hard by, but often a journey of many toilsome miles, down and up steep mountain roads in all weathers—where in these ways and a thousand others the pure strong faith of Irish Catholic hearts avows itself and points toward heaven, and cools the summer's heat, and makes the wintry blast less keen and the burden of life so much easier to bear; this is not wealth, this is not abject poverty, but I think that in the eyes of the angels this is not the least enviable of human lots; and this is, or at least used to be, Killowen."

During the whole period of this wholesome and happy life in Killowen, the children were in the care of a lady of great worth and ability, Miss Margaret O'Connor. She was always treated, as she well deserved, with the most absolute respect and confidence, which I have since frequently contrasted with the "only a governess" of poetry, and also too often of the prose of real life. The most advanced of her pupils was the second eldest of the bright little band. A very strictly disciplined band it was, but as healthy and happy as possible—with a wholesome monotony of work and play varied

by no more exciting events than week day walks or Sunday drives or occasionally a climb to the top of one of the mountains above us, or a row (not a sail) to Carlingford or Greenore, or the yearly fair at Greencastle (long since abolished). The Californian Sister of Mercy will hereafter look back to these scenes with wistful affection. Allusions to Killowen memories occur in her letters thirty and forty years later. Writing in 1892, she asks about the old woman who took care of the chapel: "Is Sally Bradley gone to her heavenly home? Will you ever forget the holly and ivy about the altar in Killowen from Christmas to March? Poor old soul, she was good and simple."

In 1844 the two eldest girls were placed in a school in Belfast; but in May, 1845, they were summoned home to the death-bed of their father, who died on the 29th of that month. May he rest in peace.

Here I will follow the recollections of one of the orphans—if that sad name could be given to children who were still to enjoy for twenty years more the care of the wisest and best of mothers.

"Lonely and sad Seafield was to us all that summer, the dear father's loss felt daily more and more. It was the year when the potato blight first appeared, and the gloomy prognostications of famine were only too truly realized in the succeeding three years. The blighted fields seemed withering away under the curse of God; and the misery, desolation and death all over the land are matters of sad history. As regarded us, it was resolved that we should dispose of Seafield and take up house again in Newry. This we did in December, 1845. A new and very happy life began for us in the dear old place. First, our earliest friends, the

Jennings family, welcomed us and were so kind. That first Christmas, which otherwise would have been a lonely one in our half-settled house, was spent in that hospitable home, and I never forgot the picture of comfort, peace and genial kindness the Christmas dinner table presented. Similar happy social evenings came often, and were a new pleasure to us after our secluded life in Killowen.

"It was not in social pleasures, however, that our happiness lay, but in the riches of religious enjoyment that opened up to us: the morning Mass, the weekly Confession which we were soon allowed by our holy confessor, and Holy Communion each week and oftener after a time. The Sunday filled with devotions —several Masses, sermons, Benedictions, teaching catechism and Vespers—made that day truly the Lord's day for us from beginning to end. And through the week the daily visit to our Lord in the always open church was a happiness not known before.

"It is now that dear Kate comes in more prominently than she has done in my recollections up to this. She was at home the comfort and resource of every one in the house. Always cheerful and equal in temper, kind, self-forgetful, thoughtful for others, helpful, untiring in her round of house duties; all loved her and looked to her in their pains and pleasures, and she had a heart for all. She was a comfortable little housekeeper, a good mender of torn garments, and she got employment especially at the stocking-basket." After mentioning sundry branches of a girl's education in which she excelled, the writer goes on: "These were all given up, as she thought she would never need them in after life; for she had

made up her mind to be a nun in an Order which served the poor only. She entered with all her heart into the religious advantages our new life presented, and joined to it earnest, self-sacrificing service of the poor. Those were the dreadful famine-years, and cholera followed the famine. Our dear mother was ever foremost in works of charity, and, when a Ladies' Society was established for the clothing and relief of the poor, she was chosen president, while Kate was an untiring and most zealous member. Between visiting the sick and poor in their wretched homes, and collecting from door to door the weekly subscriptions of those who were a little better off, and also preparing her share of the clothing which was distributed to the poor, Kate's whole time was devoted at this terrible crisis to what was to be the work of her life."

I should say that it was these charitable labors that gained for her the grace of a religious vocation, if I did not believe that she was already in her heart a Sister of Mercy. Early in the year 1848, the last of her teens, she manifested her desire and begged for her mother's permission to consecrate herself to God in the religious state.

She was not, however, the first of her mother's children to chose such a vocation. Before the point that we have reached, as far back as the year 1834, an event had occurred of some importance in this little chronicle: not the birth of the chronicler—which was chiefly important for himself—but the departure from the fireside circle of the first nun of the family. Mrs. Russell, or as we should rather call her in this context, Margaret Mullan—was born October 13, 1791, and at a very early age married a Belfast merchant, Mr. John Hamill,

who was taken from her suddenly before her thirtieth year, leaving her with three sons and three daughters, for whom, however, young as he was, he had made prudent provision. One daughter died in childhood, and one son on the verge of manhood. Of the two remaining sisters, Margaret Hamill married Peter McEvoy Gartlan, a man of exceptional ability, as may be inferred from the fact that, though practising his profession as solicitor in Dundalk and not in Dublin, he was one of three chosen to conduct the defence of "O'Connell and Others" in the famous State Trials of 1844. The brilliant articles on the subject in the *Dublin Review*, with vivid portraits of the men engaged in that mighty legal tournament, were from his pen. We may mention here, out of due season, that two of Mrs. Gartlan's children became Sisters of Mercy in the very beautiful and flourishing Convent of Tipperary. James Hamill, the eldest brother, tried his fortune in South America; but though a man of good ability and blameless life, he had not much worldly success. Arthur Hamill, Q. C., was County Court Judge for Roscommon and Sligo at the time of his death, July 20, 1886. It will hereafter be necessary to quote letters of Mother Baptist, showing her affection and admiration for this excellent man; but reference has been made to him at this point, because his other sister was, as we have said, the first nun of the household.

CHAPTER II.

CONVENT LIFE AND FIRST MISSIONS.

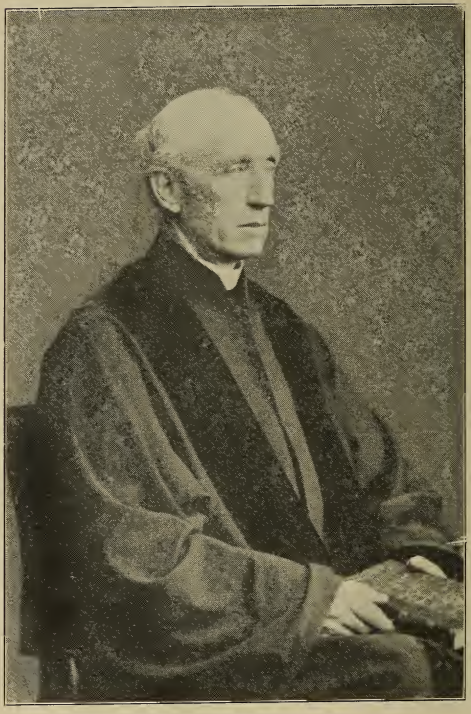
Up to the epoch of Catholic Emancipation there were few convents in Ireland. Two or three communities had managed to keep up a stealthy existence in Dublin, Galway, and Drogheda, through all the penal times. The Presentation Nuns are a century old.

It was not these, however, nor the still more recent Institutes of Irish Sisters of Charity or Sisters of Mercy that were the first to penetrate into the Black North. The Newry Convent of Poor Clares was founded in 1830 from the Dublin Convent of the Order at Harold's Cross. Before that time the most northern Convent was the Sienna Convent of Dominicanesses at Drogheda ; and it was still many a year before the Sisters of Mercy ventured to Belfast and Derry. At present they are doing their blessed work in every town, large and small, of the North, as well as of the South, East and West.

When the Sisters of St. Clare made their home beside the Presbyterian Church where John Mitchel's father then officiated, and which, now disused, guards the grave where he himself is buried with his father and mother—Anna Hamill was only fourteen. She had to



ROSTREVOR.—VIEW FROM STEPS OF CATHOLIC CHURCH.



REV. CHARLES RUSSELL, D.D.

wait four years before joining them ; but early in 1834 she left her happy home one morning, crossed the town, climbed the steep ascent beyond (called most truthfully High Street,) and entered the convent gate which she never passed through again. As Sister Mary Bernard, she lived sixty peaceful years in joyous simplicity and innocence till her death, May 23, 1894, in her 78th year.

The second nun of the family, she whose story we are telling, was only seven years old when the youthful Maynooth professor, Charles William Russell, preached what was probably his first public sermon at the profession of Sister Mary Bernard Hamill, in 1836. She had to wait for what at that age seems the long period of ten years before she could set about determining her vocation ; and, when she was old enough to make it a practical question, she did not feel drawn to the only convent with which she was personally acquainted. One who has a right to know conjectures that Gerald Griffin's musical and fervent lines about the Sister of Charity, that she was fond of repeating, had some share in making her at first desire to be enrolled among the Daughters of Mary Aikenhead, whom she then knew rather as Daughters of Vincent de Paul, the saint of her predilection. Her mother's wishes, however, and the counsels of the old Bishop, Dr. Blake, made her finally seek admission into the Institute of Mercy, founded by Mother Macaulay.

As the bright, affectionate, home-loving maiden was in the end to go as far away from her home as the girth of this small globe permits, so she began by going as far away as the length of this small island permits. The selection, however, of the Kinsale Con-

vent of Mercy was due chiefly to the intimate friendship between Father Denis Murphy, the parish priest of Kinsale, and Dr. Russell of Maynooth, who was the guardian of Arthur Russell's children. Mrs. Russell paid a visit of inspection to the Southern Convent, and was greatly attracted by the Mother Superior, Mary Francis Bridgeman, afterwards prominent as the leader of the band of Sisters who nursed the sick and wounded soldiers at Scutari during the Crimean war. She was particularly delighted with the immense amount of good wrought amongst the poor, especially through the work-schools. The hard task of selling the produce of the girls' industry was from that time one of the many works of charity to which her busy days were devoted. She spared neither time nor money in order to effect sales, travelling wherever there was a friend or acquaintance that might be tempted to purchase some of the excellent plain and ornamental work produced by the well-appointed schools of St. Joseph's, Kinsale. She never spared herself, and (harder still) she did not spare others. The only one of her letters that chances to be in my hands, illustrates her capacity for this hiphiline[1] form of almsgiving, which for many is far more difficult than putting their hand into their own pocket. This letter was addressed to the Rev. Charles O'Hare, then in the first year of his priesthood. He became parish priest of Ballinahinch, and died several years ago. May he rest in peace !

1This adjective will be sought for in vain in the dictionaries. There is, I am told, in the Hebrew grammar, a division of verbs in *hiphil* which signify " making others do the thing in question."

NEWRY, 31st December, 1851.

REV. DEAR SIR:

I cannot express how grateful we feel for your kind and holy remembrance of us, where we would most wish to be remembered, at God's holy altar. May His grace and blessing be your reward! [*Here comes in a paragraph about a Maynooth student of two months' standing.*]

You cannot think how anxiously I looked for a letter from you about the vestments. Week after week since I saw you last, I have hoped to receive your directions to forward them to Lurgan. Perhaps, if they were really in your hands, Mr. McKay might feel bound to exert himself in disposing of some of them. He certainly did hold out great encouragement and said if they were sent to him by Mr. O'Hare, that he had no doubt but between you some good would be done for the Sisters of Mercy; for he would interest clergymen in the neighboring diocese. It was this that made me so anxious to send them down. The bishop took the purple suit since I saw you, but I have still six very handsome suits and very moderate in price, too, considering the quality. I went to every place in Dublin about a month ago, when I was in town, to look at vestments and enquire prices; and in none of them, I honestly assure you, did I see such value.

I wish you were in Newry to-day that you might give your countenance to my son Charles at the delivery of his essay in the assembly rooms. You heard, I suppose, that the Newry Institute, of which Charles is a member, proposed a prize for the best essay on "the Age we Live in, its Tendencies and Exigencies." The prize was adjudged to him, and a request made that he would read or deliver it in public for the benefit of the Library Fund of the Institute. He could not very well refuse to comply, but I think it was scarcely kind or judicious to ask so young a lad to come before the public as a lecturer. It is too trying an ordeal, and may expose him to the charge of presumption,

which, thank God, he does not deserve, for it is with very great reluctance he does so. But it is a duty imposed upon him, and I hope he will discharge it with credit. Wishing you, reverend dear sir, many happy returns of the New Year, in which I am joined by all my family, I am yours very obediently,

MARGARET RUSSELL.

The lad of nineteen years, whose first public appearance is here chronicled, has been since heard of. As I have quoted this letter before its time, I may give after its time a letter in which Mr. Arthur Russell, two or three months before his death, referred to the same boy, then only twelve years old. It is curious that this tone should be taken by both parents in the only two letters that seem to have survived. I give the whole of this simple letter for the sake of the kindness and thoughtfulness that it shows.

SUNDAY, January 25, 1845.

MY DEAR MARGARET:

I received your joint epistles this morning, which gave me great pleasure. I find the children don't go to school until Monday. Tell them I am very much pleased with them all, and I trust they will continue to merit my approbation. Tell Charles I see a great improvement in his last note. I hope he will continue to improve. I am particularly pleased to find he has been so successful in his classes. All he wants is application, for I think he has the abilities, so the fault must be his own if he don't prove himself clever. It has just occurred to me that perhaps it might be an accommodation to Miss ——— to get the use of some bed clothes while the girls are with her. Besides, it will make them more comfortable, as you have them with you there. She will not be so foolish as to be offended if you would make the inquiry. Tell Lill the

geraniums are in fine health. I take great care of them, and tell Kate that Sarah did not write to me yet.

When they are settled, they need not write but monthly, unless something particular requires them to do so; it will take up their time, and it is not requisite to write oftener. They will find their time short, when it is expired. Charles will also write occasionally.

I am, my dear Margaret, Yours,

ARTHUR RUSSELL.

Some old man, who returned to Ireland, after all his friends and relatives were dead, was asked why he had done so. "I came back to see the mountains." Katherine Russell, when she was just getting ready to leave her home and friends, bade good-by to the mountains. Her last summer, 1848, was of course spent as usual in dear old Killowen, and when on the point of returning to Newry to make the last preparations for her flight, she arranged with her youngest sister and youngest brother to rise very early one bright morning in August—so early that the three had climbed Slieve Ban, and had run along the topmost ridge, in the keen, crisp, bracing mountain air, which the sun had not yet had time to warm, till they were near enough to Rostrevor to hear the church clock strike six down below, and they said the morning Angelus near to the Big Stone.

Soon after came the parting. One of the two who helped her to bid good-by to the mountains, wrote lately to the other: "Sadly I missed Kate on my return home. There was always something so restful, genial and bright about her, that no one near her could keep dull or anxious long. She was thoroughly sensible, practical and energetic and never understood

nursing sensibilities or humors—yet forbearing, patient, and reasonable, so that you could always talk of your little difficulties with her, when they would be sure to fade away of themselves."

In November, 1848, she entered her new convent home in Kinsale. What she thought of her new mother we learn from a note written forty years later, in which she mentions a letter just received from Newry, announcing good Mother Bridgeman's death. "I need not say pray for her, and ask Father Gleeson to please remember her at the altar. She was a noble woman and a holy religious."

The novice from the North had no violent change to make in her habits and tone of mind. Years before, in a sort of spiritual conference which she used to hold with her brothers and sisters in the old Killowen home, the subject proposed by her (for she was the guiding spirit of the little association) was, "what was the best way to become a saint?" The unanimous opinion of the youthful theologians was—"to do our daily duties as well as ever we can, and to do them in the presence of God, to please Him." No doubt Kinsale was quite content with this sound spirituality of Killowen.

Sister Mary Baptist, as we may henceforth call her, was from the first particularly efficient in the schools. She had been solidly educated, and what she did not know she was quick to learn, while her quiet firmness, her clearness, and her calm judgment, gave her great power in instructing the young.

"O'er wayward children wouldst thou hold firm rule
And sun thee in the light of happy faces?
Love, truth and patience— these must be thy graces—
And in thine own heart they must first keep school."

During her noviceship, Sister Baptist had an experience that was to serve her in later years. She was allowed to tend the poor creatures stricken with the cholera; for the famine had brought pestilence in its train. She had always been remarkable for her skill in nursing and comforting the sick and dying; and with all the tenderness of her sympathy, fear was unknown to her.

When the time came for her religious profession, Dr. Delaney, the Bishop of Cork, then at the beginning of his long episcopate, deputed the Bishop of Hyderabad to receive her vows. This prelate, Dr. Daniel Murphy, was then on a visit with his brother, the pastor of Kinsale. He still flourishes in hale old age as Archbishop of Hobart in Tasmania, one of the most venerable members of the world-wide hierarchy of the Catholic Church. I question very much the accuracy of Sister Baptist's own statement about the degree of spiritual knowledge she possessed at this epoch of her life. On February 11, 1882, some of her novices were to be professed. She was unable to be present and she sent them the following letter:

My Dear Sisters:

As I cannot have the happiness of hearing you pronounce your vows, I will write a few lines to wish you all every happiness on the joyous occasion. I know you will all make your consecration with fervor, from the very depths of your heart, and I am sure dear Mother Gabriel has made you fully sensible of the seriousness of the irrevocable engagements made by the Religious Profession. I must acknowledge I had very vague ideas of it myself when I was professed; but you are all more mature in your minds and can enter into it more deeply.

You must not now imagine that all is done. On the contrary, you are only now beginning. Hitherto you were apprentices, learning the principles and rules of religious life; now you must reduce them to practice in your daily life. Father Barchi said in one of his retreats, that religion is called by spiritual writers a "paradise on earth," but he thought that purgatory would be a more appropriate name. The truth is, both names are appropriate. It is a purgatory, as it offers innumerable opportunities of performing acts contrary to nature, and it is also a paradise on earth, because of the peace enjoyed by humble, docile religious, who live by faith, and see God in their Superiors, and His will in all the occurrences of life.

Our Lord assures us a hair does not fall without His permission. If we really believe this, how can we be over-anxious or worried? Let us, then, leave ourselves humbly and confidently in the hands of Divine Providence, doing all we can to glorify Him by living as true religious, real Sisters of Mercy—"gentle, patient, hard-working, humble, obedient, charitable, and, above all, simple and joyous." You will recognize the words of Father Coleridge, S. J., in his "First Sister of Mercy." They are beautiful and include everything necessary to make us saints. The last is of more consequence than most persons imagine. "God loveth the cheerful giver,' and it makes hard things easy, and helps others on the hard road as well as ourselves. You know, besides, Sister Mary Stanislaus grants an indulgence to everyone who causes a laugh at recreation, so gain all the indulgences you can; but it is more habitual holy joy I advocate. May God bless you all.

Ever your affectionate Mother,

SISTER M. B. RUSSELL,

Sister of Mercy.

Perhaps it was while assisting at this final dedication of Mary Baptist Russell to the special service of God and His poor that her elder sister resolved finally to follow her example. Elizabeth Russell was allowed to enter the same novitiate that Katherine had just passed through, but only with the stipulation exacted by her Bishop, Dr. Blake, that she could return (with her dowry) to Newry when he should have arranged for the establishment there of the Sisters of Mercy. This condition also was imposed on Sister Mary Baptist, who had to be formally released from it before taking the next step in her career. Their mother at this time, in order to facilitate a new foundation in their native town, offered to make over for the purpose all her property in Ballybot; but the situation of those houses was considered unsuitable for a convent, and the offer was declined, though this, to one who has special opportunities of judging, seems now to have been a mistake, such as God sometimes allows for some wise end.

CHAPTER III.

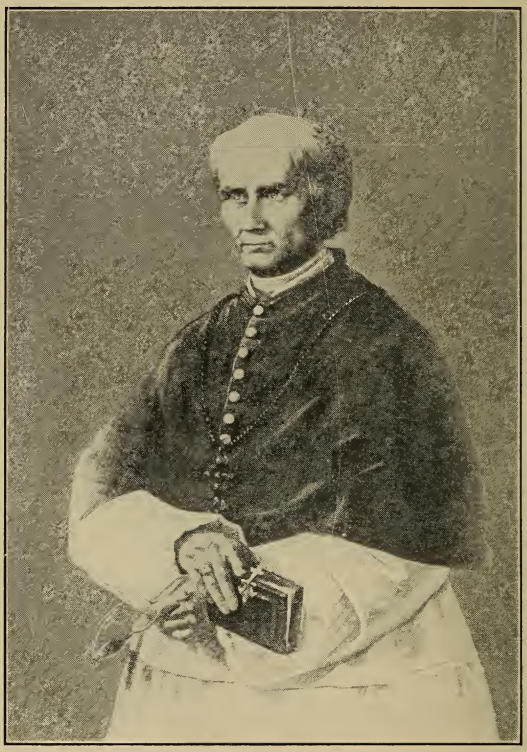
HER FIRST MISSION—SAN FRANCISCO.

WHEN the second, or rather the third, nun of the household was half way through her noviceship, in the summer of 1854, the Rev. Hugh Gallagher of San Francisco, paid a visit to his native land. He was empowered by his Bishop, a Spanish Dominican, Dr. Alemany, to bring back with him a colony of Irish Sisters of Mercy. Mother Vincent Whitty, sister to the late Father Robert Whitty, S.J. (formerly Cardinal Wiseman's Vicar General in London), was superior at that time in the Mother House in Baggot Street, which had recently supplied so many new foundations that it had not Sisters enough for its own work. Father Gallagher was therefore recommended to apply to Kinsale, where he arrived on the 28th of July, 1854, with the full approval of the Bishop of the diocese, Dr. William Delaney. The Kinsale Convent was then only eight years old, having been founded from Limerick in 1846, and yet the busy hive was ready to swarm.

At that time California seemed to be much farther away than we consider it at present; and in reality it was a very difficult place to reach, and more difficult



THE LATE REV. HUGH GALLAGHER.



THE LATE MOST REV. JOSEPH ALEMANY, O. P.

to live in. This explains the opening words of the following passage from that most interesting work, "Leaves from the Annals of the Sisters of Mercy," Vol. III., page 471 :

"As the new mission was supposed to entail unusual sacrifices, the Sisters were informed that none but volunteers would be accepted. They were counselled to consider the matter well, pray for divine direction, consult their directors and superiors, and on a given day all who were ready to go were told to offer themselves in writing and put the billets in a box at the Oratory of the Sacred Heart. Twenty-nine, almost the whole Community, offered, but Bishop Delaney would allow only five to go. The Kinsale Superior, Mother M. Francis Bridgeman, one of the grandest women, both spiritually and intellectually, that ever wore the religious habit, selected from the volunteers, with unerring judgment, Sister M. Baptist Russell, who had just left the noviate; Sister M. de Sales Reddan, who was old enough to be her grandmother; Sister M. Bernard O'Dwyer, Sister M. Frances Benson and Sister Mary Howley.

"To this contingent were added three novices who had the courage to offer themselves: Sister M. Gabriel Brown, Sister M. Paul Beechinor and Sister M. Martha MacCarthy. Accompanied by Mother Bridgeman and Sister Mary Aquin Russell, the whole party left Kinsale September 8, 1854."

As this is a very important crisis in our story, we shall give the greater part of a letter received from one of the present Community of St. Joseph's, Kinsale, describing the incidents more minutely. The "loved

old Mother'' is, of course, Mother Francis Bridgeman, of holy memory.

''Mother Mary Baptist was one of our loved old Mother's most highly esteemed and best beloved spiritual children. She often said of her that she seemed like one who had never sinned in Adam, and that she believed she never allowed self-love to argue for a moment with what she had reason to know was God's will or good pleasure. This fidelity to grace, she thought, had much more to do with her remarkable calmness of manner than had her naturally sweet temper. She often watched her under trying circumstances, but could never detect a shade of disappointment or a ruffle of any kind.

''When the San Francisco mission was proposed, she asked her confessor's advice as to offering herself for it. He did not, at first, approve of her doing so, and, when she told this to Mother M. Francis, the latter looked a little disappointed, but did not wish Sister M. Baptist to notice this, and merely said to her that she had done her part, and that they must look on her confessor's decision as God's will in the matter. Sister M. Baptist returned soon to Mother M. Francis, saying she feared she had not shown sufficient desire for the foreign missions when speaking to her confessor, and that she would be glad to see him again on the subject. Mother M. Francis, fearing she might have allowed her own disappointment to appear, and that Sister M. Baptist was about to press the matter to meet her wishes, questioned her as to her views regarding the mission. Her one desire was to do God's will, but, if she were sure it was His will for her to go on the mission, she thought she would

feel somewhat more pleased than otherwise. In a second interview her confessor gave his consent, and she offered and was accepted, without, however, being informed at first that she was destined to be the Superior.

"When all the Sisters had been selected for the California mission, they were presented to the parish priest, as the chosen missioners; and he casually asked which of them was to be Reverend Mother. Mother Mary Francis replied that it was Sister Mary Baptist; at which Sister M. B. got slightly pale, and the tears started to her eyes, but they were not allowed to fall, and when the Sisters surrounded her and offered their mingled congratulations and sympathy, she was as calm and cheerful as usual, and received all so cordially and simply that no one could form any opinion as to how the announcement affected her. When a Sister afterwards remarked to Mother M. Francis, that she pitied Sister M. Baptist and thought it must be very embarrassing to her to have her first intimation of the burden that was to be laid on her, made in public, Mother M. Francis replied that it certainly was hard, and that she would not attempt such a manner of acting with any one else, but that she knew Mother Mary Baptist well enough to feel sure that she would not betray any undue feeling on the occasion. She also said that she was not sorry to have had an opportunity of trying if *anything* could move her, but that, much as she relied on her imperturbable calmness, she had scarcely been prepared for the total absence of feeling she manifested at such an announcement.

"You [1] can, no doubt, give some interesting details of the generosity shown by her and dear Sister Mary Aquin, when your good mother hesitated, for a time, about Mother M. B.'s going to San Francisco. Sister M. Magdalen says you were here at the time, and did your part bravely, too. I asked Sister M. Magdalen's own opinion of dear Mother Baptist, and she said, with tears in her eyes, 'All I have to say of her is that she was the most perfect being, in every sense of the word, that in my judgment I ever came across.'

"The same question being put to Sister M. Elizabeth, the only other survivor of those early fifties, she said: 'You know how much dear Mother M. Francis thought of her; she was so calm, so perfect, in fact, in every way, and how she used to hold her up as a model to young Sisters. But what *I* admired most in her was her cordial, affectionate manner in the Community, and her great love for the poor. She could never see a Sister in any difficulty without trying to help her out of it, even at her own great inconvenience, so that many a time she got herself into difficulties in her effort to get others out of them. As for the poor, it used to be one of my greatest ambitions to be with her on visitation, especially at the workhouse. You know the state of misery they were in there at the time, and it would touch any heart to see her trying to console them and to help them to bear their sufferings. However calm she was under her own trials, I have known her to shed bitter tears on our way home from the workhouse, at the thought of

[1] Mother Mary Emmanuel Russell, to whom this letter is addressed by Sister Mary Evangelist.

the wretchedness she had witnessed and the little she could do to relieve it. Any little extra time or freedom she might chance to have, was always devoted to helping or relieving the poor in some way or other. She did many things in this way that others would not venture, and that were not always approved of, but she did them with so much simplicity and good faith that no one could blame her. She was one of the most loving and generous souls I ever met.'

"Tell me, for you were there!" exclaimed Richard Lalor Sheil in his famous reply to Lord Lyndhurst's jibe against the alien Irish; and Sister Evangelist in the middle of the foregoing letter makes a similar appeal to Mother Emmanuel with regard to her recollection of Mother Baptist's demeanor during this trying crisis. Accordingly we transcribe the following notes of Kate Russell's youngest sister:

"We were in Kinsale when the Chapter met to vote for the San Francisco foundation and for the Mother Superior thereof. Mother Mary Francis told us that, when the name of Sister Mary Baptist was announced as the chosen one, poor Kate was entirely unprepared for it. She started, then bowed down her head for a moment, and, when Mother M. Francis saw her face, there was not a trace of emotion or excitement, but only its usual calm, sweet expression. So accustomed was she to regard the will of a superior as the will of God in her regard, that she never dreamed of remonstrance but simply bent her will to God's, no matter what effort it cost her. This is what Mother M. Francis said of her."

This well qualified witness goes on to mention, that, as Father Gallagher was obliged to return to America

in a few weeks, the preparations of the little band of missioners had to be hurried on. She and her mother were allowed to be with Sister Mary Baptist constantly. "During all that time Kate was as calm and recollected as if leaving her convent home were a matter of every-day occurrence. Once only did her great self-control break down, and that was one day when the two Nuns, our mother and myself, were busy drawing out a quantity of tangled silk, I began to read for them some verses you had sent me from Maynooth, in which you recalled the old place in Killowen, and the family circle there, and since then the way that all were scattered, leaving me behind alone. It begins :

> "In the dim uncertain twilight
> That the close of evening brings,
> I sit in my lonely chamber
> And think of many things, etc.

"While I was reading, I saw Kate's head droop a little and a tear steal down her face—then, just for a moment, she bent with her face on her hands on the table, and, when she raised it again, her face, though wet with tears, wore its usual calm, sweet expression. None of us noticed her emotion, and the work we were at went on without a word about it." [1]

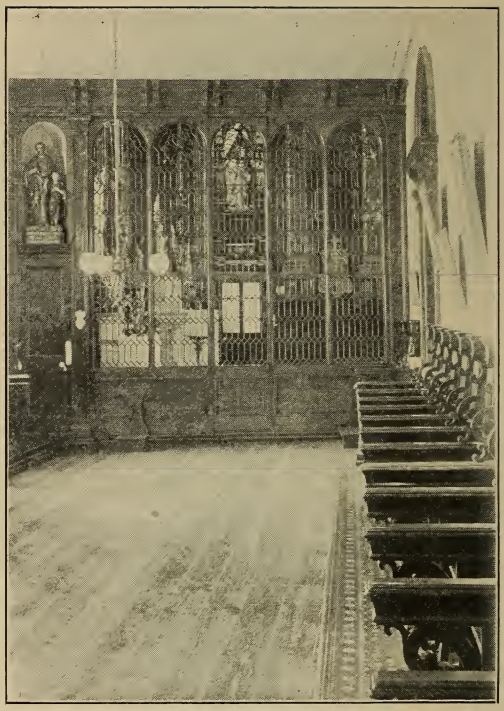
As Mother Baptist is now leaving Kinsale forever,

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[1] This poem which is called "Retrospection," has on account of these associations been included in a volume recently published by James Bowden, 10 Henrietta Street, London: "Idyls of Killowen. A Soggarth's Secular Verses." In the foregoing extract, "her usual calm, sweet expression" is mentioned twice, for no other phrase could describe so well Mother Baptist's habitual demeanor.



ST. JOSEPH'S CONVENT OF MERCY, KINSALE.— FRONT VIEW.



CHOIR IN CONVENT CHAPEL, KINSALE.

we transcribe the page of the convent register which relates to her:

"Sister Katherine Russell, in religion Sister Mary Baptist Joseph, daughter of Arthur and Margaret Russell, of Newry, County Down. Born in 1829. Entered the Convent of Our Lady of Mercy, St. Joseph's, Kinsale, on the 24th of November, 1848. Received the holy habit July 7, 1849. Made her religious profession August 2, 1851. [1] Offered for the Californian Mission, on which she was sent as Mother Superior on the 8th of September, 1854."

In making arrangement for the voyage, Father Gallagher met with a happy disappointment. He had wished to sail in *The Arctic*, but he could not secure sufficient accommodation for all his party, eighteen in number, including some Presentation nuns. He therefore deferred their departure till the 23d of September, the eve of the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy. *The Arctic* sailed without them and was lost with all on board. Dr. Silliman Ives, who had been Protestant Bishop in the United States, and had become a Catholic, had his luggage transferred from the ill-fated *Arctic* to *The Canada*, in order that he might have Father Gallagher's company; and thus, still more narrowly, he and his wife escaped.

Those who can turn to the graphic pages of the work we have already named, "Leaves from the Annals of the Sisters of Mercy," will find a some-

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[1] In a letter, dated August 2, 1893, Mother Baptist begins, "This day forty-two years ago, myself and that *fervent* soul, Mother Liguori O'Dwyer, made our profession. She is dead many years; may she rest in peace."

what minute account of the voyage to New York, (reached on the first Friday of October) and then the voyage to Greytown, the journey across the Isthmus of Panama, and finally the voyage on the Pacific in through the Golden Gate. The contemporary letters, written after their arrival are not found in the large collection in our hands. I remember that one of Mother Baptist's expedients for employing usefully the enforced leisure of travel was the vigorous study of Spanish, to qualify her for her new surroundings, then much less thoroughly Americanized than they are now. The band of missionary Nuns had left their old home on the Feast of Our Lady's Nativity, September 8th ; they reached their new home on the 8th of December, which was not only the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, but the very day on which Pius IX, amid the assembled bishops of the world, solemnly defined and promulgated that dogma of our faith. Our Blessed Lady plainly had the Sisters in her safe and holy keeping. This happy omen was, of course, adverted to at the time and the memory of it cherished every year since then. Thus on the 7th of December, 1895, Mother Baptist wrote to the compiler of these notes: "We are in California forty-one years to-morrow, Feast of the Immaculate Conception and the day Pius IX proclaimed it a dogma of our faith. Dear old Mother de Sales threw a miraculous medal into the mud as we drove from the steamer to St. Patrick's Church, and begged our Blessed Lady to take us under her protection ; and no doubt she preserved us from many dangers, notwithstanding our shortcomings."

San Francisco was then in its raw beginnings. Its

present Archbishop, Dr. Riordan, told Mother Baptist that, when he made his first Communion, there was but one Catholic church in Chicago where there were at the time that he spoke sixty-four churches. The progress of San Francisco was probably still more rapid in some respects, if not in the matter of churches : for Mother Baptist, reporting Archbishop Riordan's observation in a letter, remarks that San Francisco had not then half as many churches as Chicago, even including the convent-chapels. But when she first drove to St. Patrick's on Market Street, there were only two other churches in the place, St. Francis' in Vallejo Street and an old adobe church in the Mission Dolores, then a suburb, now absorbed into the city. The Cathedral was opened, though still unfinished, some weeks after the arrival of the Sisters.

But surely this religious accommodation was wonderfully ample when we are reminded that the town of San Francisco could hardly be said to be at that time ten years old. The name indeed of San Francisco de los Dolores had been given to the territory in 1776 by the Franciscan Fathers who succeeded the Jesuit Missionaries after the suppression of the Society ; but the hamlet itself was called Yerba Buena, till about the year 1846, when a man-of-war took possession of it for the United States. Before 1848 San Francisco, as it had begun to be called, had only three hundred inhabitants ; but in that year the gold mines were discovered, and the population increased suddenly month by month to 2,000 and 20,000. The figures given for the year 1850 are 34,000 ; for 1860, 56,800 ; for 1870, 149,470 ; for 1880, 233,900 ; and in 1885, 275,000. Later figures are not at hand ; and we need only add

that in the Presidential election of 1884 10,000 of the 12,800 who had once been British subjects were Irish —which is an indication of the strength of the Irish element in the population. Evidently by that time there was a fine field for the labors of Irish Sisters of Mercy.



SISTER MARY FRANCIS BENSON.



SISTER MARY GABRIEL BROWN.

CHAPTER IV.

BEGINNING OF THE MISSION IN SAN FRANCISCO.

THINGS were in a crude state when they began their mission. Fifty years later, writing in April, 1896, Mother Baptist mentions that fresh eggs (then twenty cents a dozen) were three dollars a dozen when they had first to buy them. A grimmer trait of those primitive times is the statement that we have seen in a San Francisco newspaper that between the years 1849 and 1856 a thousand homicides were committed in the little city, and out of these there were only seven convictions.

Dr. Alemany and his priests received the Sisters most kindly. "From the first," wrote Mother Baptist, "we felt that we had a saint to deal with in the Archbishop." He appointed December 12, as his first day to celebrate Mass for them, and they wondered how he had fixed on the anniversary of the foundation of their Order, which was a feast of the first class for them; but they found that this date was also the greatest of the Mexican feasts of the Blessed Virgin under the title of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

January 2, 1855, they established themselves in a small house in Vallejo Street, near the county hospital.

By degrees Mother Baptist quietly and prudently undertook the various works that were most pressingly needed, especially the nursing of the sick and the education of the young. The rapidly rising town was then very unhealthy, and cholera (introduced by a ship *Uncle Sam*, September 5, 1855) wrought dreadful havoc amongst the inhabitants. Mother Baptist used with great effect her recent experience of that terrible plague in Ireland. She and her Sisters went fearlessly into the overcrowded hospital, and their heroic charity at once secured for them the love and respect of the people. One of their newspapers, *The Daily News*, wrote as follows :

" We visited yesterday the patients in the hospital ; a more horrible and ghastly sight we have seldom witnessed. In the midst of this scene of sorrow, pain, anguish and danger, were ministering angels who disregarded everything to aid their distressed fellow-creatures. The Sisters of Mercy, rightly named, whose convent is opposite the hospital, as soon as they learned the state of things, hurried to offer their services. They did not stop to inquire whether the poor sufferers were Protestants or Catholics, Americans or foreigners, but with the noblest devotion applied themselves to their relief. One sister might be seen bathing the limbs of a sufferer, another chafing the extremeties, a third applying the remedies, while others with pitying faces were calming the fears of those supposed to be dying. The idea of danger never seems to have occurred to these noble women · they

heeded nothing of the kind. If the lives of any of the unfortunates be saved, they will owe their preservation to those noble ladies."

The dreadful epidemic not only opened the doors of the hospital to the Sisters, but installed them there officially. On fixed conditions they assumed the entire control of the institution, October 24, 1855. Of course there were many outbursts of bigotry, met by the most favorable reports from the Protestant physicians and all who were qualified to judge, but, when the sick of the County Hospital were transferred in July, 1857, to North Beach, the municipal authorities did not invite the holy and devoted nurses to accompany them. The Sisters rented the vacated premises from the city, changing the name "State Union and County Hospital" into "St. Mary's Hospital." Their work prospered, and they were obliged to seek a larger house, which was found at the meeting of First Street and Bryant Street. [1] Here St. Mary's Hospital has gradually grown in extent and in the completeness of its equipment until to-day it stands a noble monument of the courageous and persevering zeal and energy of its foundress.

Father Slattery of Marysville, who preached an eloquent sermon at the laying of the foundation stone of

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[1] The curt American way of giving this address on envelopes suggested the following quatrain to one of Mother Baptist's correspondents :

> The best of all possible matches, they say,
> Are those manufactured by Bryant and May,
> And of possible Convents by no means the worst,
> Is the Convent located on Bryant and First.

St. Mary's, died of typhoid fever a month after, under the care of the Sisters in the old hospital. It was Father King who chiefly collected the funds for building the hospital. Indeed all the priests helped the Sisters most generously, and very few of the letters home, especially in the early years, failed to express Mother Baptist's gratitude to her reverend benefactors. Naturally her Jesuit brother was duly informed of the goodness of his religious brethren. "God bless the Jesuits" is a phrase that frequently occurs in her letters. Some of these had been fellow-travellers on that memorable journey from the Empire City to the Golden Gate, which ended on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1854. The Fathers of the Society seemed to have been at first absorbed in the work of education. They soon established their college at Santa Clara, which has since developed so nobly. Yet can the author of "Leaves from the Annals of the Sisters of Mercy" be quite accurate in stating that not for some months but "for the first few years there was only one Jesuit in the city, Father Maraschi?" "Nevertheless," she adds, "they (her Californian Sisters) never missed a Retreat, and their Retreats have always been conducted by Jesuits." Many years afterwards, as late as July, 1896, writing to her sister in Newry, Mother Baptist remarks apropos of certain sudden deaths: "Those two Jesuits [1] in *The Irish Monthly* went unexpectedly. I think the

[1] Evidently Father Denis Murphy, who died May 18, 1896, and Father Carton, who died on the fifteenth of the preceding month, both in the manner here described. May they rest in peace!

one who went calmly to the Rector and asked to be anointed as he felt death at hand had a most enviable end. What a sweet faith and conformity of will he manifested. Our first Jesuit friend here, good Father Maraschi, now very old, is almost blind, but manages to do a great deal."

The truest friend, however, to the Sisters was to the last their first friend, the first Californian priest they had seen, the ambassador from the New World who had invited them to "fresh fields and pastures new," though even Father Hugh Gallagher was rivalled by his reverend brother, Joseph, in quiet devotion to their interests. Very fitly Father Hugh was chosen to preach at the funeral of the Sister who, out of this little band of holy emigrants, was the first to emigrate to the newest world of all. One is almost surprised to find that the oldest of the community was the first to die, for death seldom follows a chronological order, and mourners have often complained, like a bereaved parent in one of Gerald Griffin's ballads,

> "That death a backward course should hold—
> Should smite the young and spare the old."

Mother de Sales Reddan was the Aunt of Mother Francis Bridgeman of Kinsale, to whom, as to other nieces and nephews, she had taken the place of their mother. She had founded the Good Shepherd convent in Limerick, which has now done glorious work for souls for more than fifty years. As soon as she had placed this and her other works of charity on a permanent basis, Dr. Ryan, the Bishop of Limerick allowed her to depart, and she placed herself under her niece at Kinsale, the most docile and humble of

novices. Her zeal and spirit of perfect detachment prompted her, as we have seen, to make further sacrifices and to go from World's End [1] to the ends of the earth at what seemed to her youthful companions quite a venerable age, for she was more than twice as old as her Mother Superior in San Francisco. She caught a fatal cold in July, 1857, while travelling by steamer with Mother Baptist to establish their first branch at Sacramento City. Her youthful Superior wrote of her thus, not when her loss was recent, but many years later :

" I never met any one more forgetful of self or more zealous for souls. I have seen her with clasped hands and tears coursing down her cheeks, praying for some poor hardened sinner. She felt we had a grand field for our labors in this country, and her gratitude for being assigned to such a mission was unbounded. I never could tell you what she was or describe the impression she made on all with whom she came in contact. She is remembered and spoken of still, after the lapse of so many years, and you know how short her career in California was—not quite three years. I did not mind so much the feeling manifested at the time of her death. It was so sudden that it created a sensation by that circumstance alone. Besides, she was the first religious that died in San Francisco, or even in California. But I do really feel astonished when some circumstance causes her to be mentioned, and I

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[1] This is the name given to a cluster of fishermen's cottages on the shore near Kinsale ; at least it was so called in August, 1854, when the writer climbed up the Stony Steps to bid goodbye forever to the subject of the present sketch.

see how vivid is the remembrance of her words and actions. Even Archbishop Alemany, who seemed a regular stoic in his way, more than once alluded to her with real feeling."

Long before its time the curious circumstance may be noted that, as Father Hugh Gallagher preached at the obsequies of Mother de Sales, the first Sister of Mercy buried in Californian soil, so Father Hugh Gallagher preached at the obsequies of Mother Baptist herself more than forty years later. But in the latter case it was a Jesuit nephew and namesake of the good old man who had died long before.

I once heard a good mother pray that all her children might die before her; and the motive of this strange wish was that she might have a share in securing for each of her dear ones the supreme grace of a happy death. Mother Baptist prayed no such prayer with regard to the original band of Sisters whom she led out to the New World; but, as a fact, she helped them all through their last passage into the newest world of all—all of them except one. Sister Mary Howley survives her.

Sister Mary's experience, therefore, goes back to Mother Baptist's noviceship. This good lay-sister ought to have been summoned earlier as a witness. Here is a portion of her testimony:

"When I entered the convent, Reverend Mother was in her nineteenth year. She had entered in November, 1848, and I in the following May. When I saw her first, she had fair hair, dark eyebrows and rosy cheeks, and looked beautiful. While she was a postulant, she taught the novices, but she was always very humble and made nothing of it. She was ten

months a postulant, Mother Francis Bridgeman having been called away to Limerick on account of the cholera. Mother Francis had always great confidence in her. Even in the noviceship she used to try to excuse the Sisters, and Mother Francis pretended not to like it, though she afterwards acknowledged that she admired her for it. She would say in such a nice, sweet way, 'Now, Mother, Sister did not mean it that way,' etc. Charity was her favorite virtue. She could never see a fault in anyone. She could never blame anyone. 'There was a little fault, perhaps, but a great deal of good to cover that.' I was young, but I thought her an example to the world. She was so humble, and all her family were the same. I never saw an imperfection in her, and I always felt as though she were related to me. I am sure I gave her a great deal of trouble, but she was so patient with me. When I would commit an imperfection, she would say, 'Well, dear, if you did not commit that, there would be no imperfection, and then we might become proud.' She was a religious according to God's own heart, and all that a Sister of Mercy should be. That is the reason Mother Francis sent her out here. I saw Mother McAuley, and she always reminded me of her. She had a practice of always invoking the Holy Ghost in everything she undertook, and I am sure was always guided by His Spirit.

"There was a foundation in Clonakilty in question before the California foundation, and Mother Francis had her in her mind as the Superior of it, but she did not know it. Father Hugh Gallagher then came to Kinsale to apply for a foundation for California. Mother Francis did not at first approve of it, and it

was unsettled for a while. She had heard some strange stories about California, and feared the Sisters would be scalped, and would not give her consent to let any of her children go. There was a young man, a lace merchant, who happened to call at the convent after leaving California, and she questioned the young man about the laws here, and how everything was. He told her that the law was that every law-breaker was punished according to what he deserved. This relieved her, and she afterwards felt more at ease. Father Hugh told her that the Sisters would have a convent when they arrived. She discussed matters with him, but did not agree with him on some things, so it was postponed. He then came to her and told her that she was going against the will of God and interfering with the salvation of souls if she refused to give the foundation for California."

Sister Mary then goes on with a part of the story that we have had before, about Sister Mary Baptist's appointment as leader of the little missionary troop. "Then her mother came, but she said no—she had let her go far enough and could not let her go any further. Reverend Mother prevailed on her, and brought Sister Mary Paul, and Sister Mary Gabriel, a novice [a bright young girl, Sylvia Brown, belonging to a highly connected family of County Limerick] into the parlor, as well as the others who were going ; and this touched Mrs. Russell, and she gave her consent." Sister Mary ends this part of her narrative with the remark : "Rev. Mother was like her mother, who was a fine business woman."

It will be best to give continuously the rest of Sister Mary's "deposition," though it takes us beyond

the point that we have reached and attributes a sort of prophecy to the present writer.

"After coming out here, I was very lonely, and I used to fret a great deal, but Rev. Mother would shake her finger at me with a sweet smile. When I would look at her working and scrubbing, I would feel ashamed of myself, and say, 'She is a fine lady and see what she does, so why should I complain?'

"We arrived here on December 8th, and went to stay with the Sisters of Charity. At the end of the year we made our Renovation retreat, and Rev. Mother herself gathered a few sticks and made a sweet little crib for ourselves. We were as happy as it was possible to be.

"When we were really poor in the hospital, we did not have very many fine beds, and Rev. Mother used to sleep in a little place at the head of the stairs. She waited one day until we were at recreation, and went and hauled the hair mattress which she had downstairs, and gave it to a poor man who had only a straw bed. She arranged his bed with her own mattress. I found that she did this, and I told Bridget Kennedy, and she went to Rev. Mother's cell, and found a piece of carpet stretched on the cot to take the place of the mattress. She then got her another mattress, and wrote 'Rev. Mother' in big letters, so that she could not give it away again.

"She was kindness itself in her visitations to the sick. One time she heard of a poor family, and when she went there she found the poor woman lying in bed in consumption. Her husband was away. When Rev. Mother saw the distress, she came back, and went over to the Home, and took all the dresses, shirts, etc.,

she could get and also went to the Infirmary drawers and took sheets and tunics, etc. She did this so often that they had to lock the Infirmary drawers on her. They used to tell her she would never make a poor man's wife, as she would have him robbed, at which she always laughed. On the day I was speaking about, she went supplied with what was necessary, and when she got there, put on a tin of water to heat, washed the poor woman, and got her comfortably settled in bed. When this was done, she took the little ones one by one and put them into the tub of water and washed them, and dressed them with new shirts. The last little one she had no shirt for, so she took a napkin and cut holes in it for sleeves, and fixed it around him and wrapped him in a comforter. She used to go and visit this family and help them nearly every day. She loved the poor. There used to be a crazy woman, and she used to go to her cell and say, 'I want to get into your bed,' and Mother would get up and put her in, not thinking that any one knew it, and would stay around her. She loved to make her happy even for a couple of minutes.

"We were always happy and united. It was like a heaven upon earth. Of course we suffered a great deal after coming here, but Mother would insist on doing all the drudgery. She would often stay at home and do the hard work, and send M. M. De Sales, Sr. M. Bernard, Sr. M. Gabriel and myself to the Hospital, from nine in the morning till six in the evening. She used to put her apron on, tuck up her habit, and do all the cooking, cleaning and scrubbing. She was a model of humility.

"After her visits to the Asylum, the penitents

would say, 'Didn't Rev. Mother leave peace after her? She made us so happy.' She was very fond of them.

"At one time Father Russell was giving the Sisters a retreat in one of their foundations, and Sr. Veronica was appointed to wait on him. When he heard she was from Kinsale, he asked her if she knew Sister Mary Baptist. She said, 'Father, I do indeed, and I could write a book about her.' She did not know that she was speaking to her brother, and she afterwards wrote me about it. He then remarked, 'Well, I may one day write a book about her.' They idolize her memory in Kinsale. After being out here, her appearance changed a great deal, so that when she went back to Kinsale, one of the Sisters asked her, not knowing her, 'When will Mother Baptist come to visit us?' She became so dark, they did not know her, and told her she had turned into a Yankee. She seemed to possess every virtue. She would humble herself to ask the opinion of others, and make one feel ashamed. She was the same to everyone, and if there was any exception, she was more tender to the poor and afflicted. When one would go to talk with her, it was almost like going to Confession. You would come away light-hearted. Whatever she said, you would look upon as sacred. I never remember seeing her in the least angry. She was servant to the servants, and according to God's own heart. She would sometimes be displeased with me, but she would come back and make it up with me again, showing that she had entirely forgotten the fault. Oh, I owe my perseverance to dear Rev. Mother. She was so patient and kind with me. If you committed a fault, and someone

would speak of it to her, she would be careful never to mention the name of the person from whom she received her information. She was so careful on all points of charity, and had a charitable construction to put on everyone's actions, at least attributing it to ignorance, or saying that there was certainly no bad motive in doing it. I could not say enough about her. Every one loved her."

CHAPTER V.

THE LETTERS OF MOTHER MARY BAPTIST RUSSELL.

FATHER IGNATIUS GRANT, S.J., remarks somewhere that of all saints the letter-writing saints are the most popular; and Cardinal Newman has said that a man's life and character are best known from his letters. Exception might be taken to both statements, though they are substantially true within certain limitations. Engrossed as Mother Baptist was in business of various kinds through all the moments of her crowded days, she considered it a duty and an excellent exercise of zeal and charity to keep up intercourse by letter with her kinsfolk and her religious sisters, especially in Newry and Kinsale.

The letters sent home during the early years of the Californian mission seem to have disappeared. The Sisters were already five years at work in February, 1860, the earliest date I can find. The young Reverend Mother writes then to her own mother whom she addresses to the end in the old childlike fashion as

"MY DEAREST MAMMA:

"It is nearly two months since Mr. O'Connor delivered your fine collection of letters, also the 'Life of Mezzo-



CONVENT OF MERCY, NEWRY.



CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL, NEWRY.

fanti' and the pamphlet by dear Charles. [1] I must thank dear Arthur, Margaret, Matthew, etc., etc., *through you*, as I cannot write to themselves. I sent on your letters to Columbus by next mail. You must not be displeased, as it pleases the poor creatures there so much to hear all the particulars. I have not got a reading of Uncle Charles' book yet, as it has been borrowed by some of the priests. Poor Uncle Charles seems doomed not to enjoy the quiet of college life very long. I hear that he is surely to be Bishop this time. Mrs. Rose Kelly, whom I have often mentioned, was quite interested in dear Charles' articles on workhouses. She is a matron of a large lunatic asylum about one hundred and fifty miles from this in a town called Stockton since the 1st of last June. She often tells us she will see our people yet, as she intends, please God, to visit the old sod once more. She has on an average one hundred and sixty female lunatics; and there are fully twice as many men. It is quite a remarkable fact that, though the population of California is for the greater part Catholic and Irish, there is quite a small proportion of either in the asylum, the effect of *religion*, of course.

"We are going on here, thank God, as usual. We hope, too, that 1860 will surely see our building pretty far on. The contract for the brick required was duly signed on the 2d of this month. Our good Mother wants to signalize all her Feasts by something propitious. Sister M. Francis sends you her love and desires me to tell you *I am very good*. I tell her you know that already. Dear Sarah is now in her second year; please God, she will be professed this time twelve months. I have hardly left myself room to send love to all. I would wish to

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[1] Probably "The Catholic in the Workhouse," published by Richardson of London and Derby, just after the late Chief Justice of England had been called to the Bar.

begin with yourself, I send you my fondest love, dearest mamma, a thousand times, and I hope your love makes you pray and pray over and over for me and mine. To Arthur, James, Margaret, Anne, Mary and all the little ones, also to Aunt Anne, Kate, Elizabeth and all my dear uncles my love.

"I remain, dear Mamma, your affectionate child in Jesus Christ. Sister M. B. RUSSELL."

Mother Baptist alludes in the foregoing to her youngest sister as having joined her eldest and being now half-way through her noviceship as a Sister of Mercy. When the second half thereof was nearly completed, she refers to her again in less respectful terms. Writing to the same correspondent on the 9th of March, 1861, she remarks that letters posted in Ireland in January had reached her the day before; and this she considers wonderfully quick travelling for the mails. Nowadays they would make the journey in quarter of the time.

"That little rogue, Sister Mary Emmanuel, is to be professed on the 8th of next month. Just think of her writing but once to us since she entered! We are half inclined not to pray one bit for her unless she writes to beg our prayers in the meantime."

The infrequency of the Newry novice's letters was not due to any indifference of her towards her exiled sister. At that very time she was longing to share her exile. She had perhaps made up her mind as to her vocation as early as her elder sisters; but their departure had left her alone with her mother, from whom it seemed hard to demand this additional sacrifice. She always intended, however, to go out to San Francisco as soon as she could be spared; and even

when Mother Catherine O'Connor, the first Superior in Newry, and Sister Mary Aquin persuaded Mrs. Russell to let her youngest daughter enter the newly founded convent of her native town, Sister Mary Emmanuel did so with the intention of going out to Mother Baptist when a fitting opportunity should offer. "In those days such opportunities [she writes] did not often occur; and, as my time of profession drew near and no chance of getting out seemed likely, I had to content myself and remain where I was, though the wish was ever present to my mind, not so much for the affection I always felt for dear Kate as because there was no one for whom I have ever felt the same reverence and dependence."

If Mrs. Russell did not send another of her daughters to Mother Baptist's aid, she largely assisted more than one Irish maiden to make their way for this purpose to the Golden Gate. At the beginning of 1861 the new hospital in San Francisco was approaching completion; and it was considered best, in furnishing it, to deal directly with the English manufacturers of the different articles required—a measure of doubtful prudence even in those far-off days when the resources of San Francisco were so poor compared with her present all-sufficiency. Mary Baptist asked her mother to invest in this manner a few supplementary hundreds which she was able to allot to her dear exile in the final settlement of her affairs which she made about this time when she felt that her *Nunc dimittis* must be near. She discharged this commission with her usual thoroughness, travelling to the various English towns where the articles necessary for the equipment of a hospital were manufactured, and spar-

ing no fatigue or expense till all the enormous crates and bales had been safely shipped to California about the beginning of 1861. To her too great exertions may be attributed a stroke of apoplexy which fell upon her soon after, and nearly proved fatal. She recovered, however, but she never was the same again. This was the perfecting grace that closed her energetic and most useful life. Her last six years were but a lingering death. Her patience, unselfishness and self-control never forsook her. There was never a murmur or complaint—always easily pleased and ready to enjoy a visit from one of the Sisters, for it is pleasant to record that the good mother who had given away all her daughters most cheerfully to the religious state received more care and comfort from them to the last than if she had selfishly urged her counter-claims when the message came to them, one after the other, "The Master is come and calleth thee." (John xvii, 28.) Mrs. Arthur Russell was allowed, as a special benefactress of the Newry Convent of Mercy, to spend her last years in a house that formed part of the convent premises. And so it came to pass that the sacrifice she had made in giving so many of her children to God's special service was rewarded by a happy and peaceful deathbed surrounded by nuns who loved and revered her, and among them two of her own daughters, though her death took place at so early an hour as half-past three o'clock A. M., of the 29th of August, 1867. She was in her seventy-sixth year. May she rest in peace.

It is strange that the following note, which reached the next day the pretty little town of Newtonbarry, where the Faithful Companions of Jesus had just fin-

ished their annual retreat, should have survived so long.

THURSDAY MORNING, AUG. 29, 1867.

MY DEAREST MATTHEW:

Dear, dear Mamma has left us without a struggle, like a baby sleeping, she went so calmly—with Reverend Mother and many of the Sisters praying round her—at 3:15 o'clock this morning. Since I wrote last, she seemed to suffer very little. She was so very patient, thank God for His wonderful mercy and love to her all through her illness. She had every comfort and consolation. *You* can do more for her now than any of us, and *will* do it, too. Your good priests will remember her also.

There are many letters to be written, so excuse my short one to you.

Your loving sister,

MARY EMMANUEL.

Another of the watchers beside that deathbed refers back to it in the following letter nearly three months later:

CONVENT OF MERCY,
ROSTREVOR, NOV. 13, 1867.

MY DEAR MATTHEW:

Long have I been wishing to spend half an hour talking to you on paper; so, dear Matthew, this is a selfish gratification for me. I hope I may give you even a little bit of pleasure. I know nothing of you at all, and would not be sure you were in Limerick, were it not that Mother Francis Bridgeman mentioned to me in a recent letter that you had paid her a flying visit during her stay in that far-famed city. She thought you looked *old*. Did she tell you Kate is expected over from San Francisco in spring? The letter which states this, is, I believe, to our dear de-

parted mother. I was staying in Newry lately, having been a great invalid since I saw you. I am only now recovering and that very slowly. God knows what is best for us all. Often I would fain have written to ask your renewed prayers for me. I do not wish nor pray to be well, but I want to be a cheerful, edifying sufferer ; or I should say more correctly, I desire to suffer in the spirit my Lord and Spouse wishes me to suffer. I don't know when I was so ill, and oh ! how I dreaded losing patience ! Mamma's example was ever before me. Matthew, such a mother as ours was ! What silent, enduring patience ! No one would suppose she had any pain, and oh ! if you had seen the bleeding, bruised back, and if you knew the sleepless, agonizing nights and days she passed ; and her constant request was that her children might not know what she was enduring lest it should pain them. Her daughter and a religious, and so different my spirit ! This was harder on me than all. Dearest Matthew, I thank God we have you our mediator at Calvary, through the Holy Mass. This is now my greatest comfort. Pray very, very much for me. You know what I should be ; implore this great grace for me. It is so encouraging in pain either of mind or body to be assured we have strong advocates in our hour of need. I am writing just as I think, not waiting to make this a connected epistle. You don't mind that. [Then after two pages asking prayers for the wants of other people, the holy, unselfish soul went on.] This is surely a selfish letter, but such it must be. We have nothing strange here except a new curate, and a French Sister of Charity over from Liverpool, attending a sick gentleman in the village. You may be sure this is a nine days' wonder. Dearest Matthew, with gratitude and thankfulness to God for having a brother a priest, believe me your own loving sister,

SISTER M. AQUIN RUSSELL.



MARGARET RUSSELL.



THE GRAVE OF ARTHUR AND MARGARET RUSSELL.

CHAPTER VI.

SISTER MARY AQUIN (ELIZABETH RUSSELL).

"LIKE father, like son" is less true than "like mother, like daughter." Mother and daughter are more closely and constantly united in the tender, impressionable years of childhood; and the mother has more unceasing opportunity of moulding the dispositions and manners of her little girl. The striking similarity of character in dissimilar spheres of duty, which proved Mary Baptist Russell to be her mother's daughter, may be pleaded as an excuse for so long a digression from the story of the first Californian Sister of Mercy; and we trust that the interest of a very attractive personality will excuse a further digression that we are about to make in order to link the name of her elder sister, the writer of the letter last quoted, with two or three bits of literature of which she was the inspiration. On the authority of Lady Gilbert herself—she was then Rosa Mulholland—we claim for Sister Mary Aquin (Elizabeth Russell) the distinction of having been the original of the nun who figures in one of the most exquisite tales, for which Dickens himself chose the name of "Hester's History," and which ran through a twelvemonth of his famous

weekly magazine, *All the Year Round*. Here is the way in which the novelist describes a convent parlor and her beloved friend and kinswoman, Sister Mary Aquin, whom she here transfers from the patronage of the Angel of the Schools to that of an earlier Doctor of the Church.

"The room into which Hester was shown had brown panelled walls and a brown panelled floor. There was a large vase of lilies and roses, a full-length statue of Christ blessing the little children, an alms-box, with its label 'For the Sick and Dying Poor,' a table covered with a plain red cloth, an inkstand bearing writing materials, a few books. The windows were already open, and there was not one speck of dust about the place. It shone with cleanliness, it smiled with cheerfulness, it gave one Good morning! out of all its corners. By-and-by the handle turned; there was a little rustling as of fresh linen, a little rattling as of heavy beads; the door opened, and the 'Mother' appeared. Here were sweet, tender, pitiful blue eyes, and a brow smooth and serene under its spotless little band; no latent fire, no lines to show where frowns had been. The face was oval and softly moulded, and very winning in its exquisite freshness and purity. The mouth was mobile, and, though ever quick with a right word, was yet, in its changing expressions, most eloquent of much that it left unspoken. The complexion was so dazzling fair, so daintily warmed with its vermilion on the cheeks, no paint nor powder could mimic it; only early rising, tender labors, never-ceasing and perpetual joy of spirit, could have combined in producing it. The quaint black garment, the long, floating veil, and narrow gown of serge, were right fit

and becoming to the wearer. They laid hold of her grace and made their own of it, while she, thinking to disguise herself in their sombre setting, wrapped the unlovely folds around her, and shone out of them, as only the true gem can shine. The shadow that the black veil threw round her face made its purity almost awful, but made its bloom and simplicity the more entirely enchanting. Not the satins of a duchess, not the jewels of an empress, could have lent half such a fitting lustre to this womanly presence of the gentle Mother Augustine, of the daughters of St. Vincent, in the old Convent of St. Mark.''

There are many still whose memory will recognize this as a faithful picture of Sister Mary Aquin. We have already mentioned that, before her novitiate in Kinsale was completed, she returned to Newry to assist Mother Mary Catherine O'Connor in establishing a Convent of Mercy in her dear native town. Her profession was one of the first occasions on which the people of Newry heard a voice that was to instruct and delight them for a score of years—that of the holy Dominican, John Pius Leahy, who had just been appointed Coadjutor to the venerable Bishop of Dromore, Dr. Michael Blake. The old Bishop, on the 14th of April, 1856, wrote to Father Patrick O'Neill, who had been chiefly instrumental in bringing the Sisters of Mercy to Newry. This admirable priest was then spending a well-earned holiday in Rome. ''I feel great pleasure, because I am sure it will give you joy, in assuring you that God has been pleased to bless the labors you underwent here in founding the Convent of Mercy with so many marks of His divine favor and approbation as I would have considered in the begin-

ning almost incredible. Miss Russell's profession on the Tuesday after Dominica in Albis, and the Right Rev. Dr. Leahy's instructions and influence, have added powerfully to the zeal and exertions of the Rev. Mother Superioress of that community. Within the last two or three weeks postulants have been received into it, and on this day two postulants have applied to me. We lamented, at the commencement, that we would want subjects for its duties; our difficulty now is to have cells enough for their reception, and commodious schools, and, above all, a decent and neat, if not a fully becoming chapel, for the Sisters and inmates."

The best wishes of the old Bishop for his new convent have long since been fulfilled. It has meanwhile, year by year, done an immense amount of good; and it has in its turn sent out colonies to Lurgan, Rostrevor, Warrenpoint and Bessbrook, the first of which has already, out of its abundance, bestowed the same grace upon Cookstown. Of these, the branch house at Rostrevor was Sister Mary Aquin's peculiar work. The beautiful little convent, which is sheltered under the holy shadow of the church-spire that rises grandly over leafy Rostrevor, was built chiefly through her heroic exertions.

Her usefulness certainly did not end with the breakdown in her health which was partly due to her excessive labors in procuring funds under very great difficulties for the completion of the convent at Rostrevor. For many of her last years her work was chiefly the exceedingly hard work of giving edification by brightness and unselfish cheerfulness during chronic ill-health, though she was ingenious also in utilizing

every moment of the enforced leisure of an invalid. It was at this time that another picture of her was drawn in verse by the same artist who has already described her in prose :—

I see a convent gray—
  It standeth above the town ;
It looketh from the distant way
  Like a monk in his faded gown.

The town is older and grayer
  That sitteth below its feet ;
And sin, and pain, and sorrow, and care,
  Are dwelling in every street.

Dwelling in every street,
  Yet hurried from place to place,
As the Sisters go with their burden sweet,
  Bread, and comfort and grace.

In a nook of that convent gray
  She dwelleth, my tender Saint ;
Sweeter her face than I can say,
  Nobler than word can paint.

Her wimple is white as milk,
  Her robe is coarse and spare ;
And never a lady in gems and silk
  Looked half so grand and fair.

Her mind is a river of light,
  Her heart is a well of love ;
But none may look on her soul so white
  Save only the Lord above.

That soul's most rapid flame—
  The soul of my tender Saint—
It wasteth sore her beautiful frame,
  And maketh her body faint.

She stayeth her eager feet,
And goeth not oft to the town ;
But up in her window, lone and sweet,
She sitteth, and gazeth down.

O crowded, sad gray walls,
O people who dwell within,
Little ye know of the tear that falls
Day by day for your sin !

Her town is her nested dove—
She huggeth it close and dear ;
She wrappeth it round with motherly love,
She watcheth with motherly fear.

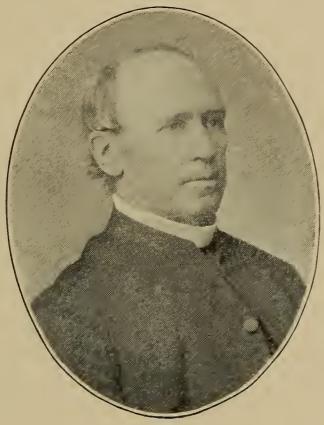
They turn, the godless men,
They turn their steps and they come ;
They know not why, but they come again,
As this were their childhood's home.

They turn with willing feet,
The foolish wife and maid ;
They have no fear of the lips so sweet,
That preach, but never upbraid.

They come, with blushing face ;
And they come, with tearful eye ;
And one hath sorrow, and one disgrace,
To whisper when none are by.

And kneeling close to her knee,
They catch her fire, I ween ;
And, burning strangely and holily,
Are not what they have been.

She hath them all in her heart,
It is deep, and strong, and broad—
And well I know with what loving art
She talketh of them to God.



REV. PATRICK O'NEILL, P.P., ROSTREVOR



SIR JOHN AND LADY GILBERT.

These beautiful lines are called "My Saint." One day that the young poet was walking with her beloved Saint in the tiny garden that lies between the church and the convent of Rostrevor, the nun's thin, white fingers plucked a rose and gave it to its namesake. That evening two or three lines were scribbled with a pencil on a scrap of paper, without any thought of their being shown to any one, even to the giver of the rose; yet here they are after so many years:

God bless the dews that fed, the winds that rocked thee,
Wee rose divine!
God bless the holy hands that kindly plucked thee,
To press in mine.
God love the loving heart whose love is in thee
Laid up for me,
And may her sweet and sacred counsels win me
Eternity!

After linking true poetry with the saintly and gentle memory of Sister Mary Aquin, there is bathos in adding that she was before in a homelier poet's mind when he exclaimed:

"May God be blessed, with all my soul I cry,
For giving elder sisters! Who as they
Can soothe and chide us, guard and purify,
Discreetly scold, and then good-humored play,
Mother and sister both, so grave and yet so gay?"

And she also was one of

"— those fair angels, saintly, wise, light-hearted,
Whose smile made pure the very air I breathed,
And who at parting—for we all have parted—
Sweet, sanctifying memories bequeathed." [1]

[1] See the opening poem of "Vespers and Compline: a Soggarth's Sacred Verses."

But we have lingered too long with the sweet spirit of Mother Baptist's oldest sister. Her *prolixitas mortis* came to an end, and the welcome Angel of Death summoned her at last on the 1st of August 1876, in the forty-ninth year of her age. Her happy death occurred in the branch convent she had worked hard to establish; and this is the reason why Rostrevor is not mentioned gratefully with Newry, Warrenpoint and Killowen in this fragment of one of the last letters that she ever wrote:

"I still continue to get pigeons, wild-fowl, grapes, jellies, etc., from kind friends in Newry and Warrenpoint; and sundry presents of fresh eggs, butter, apples and flowers from the kind people in Killowen. I mention this to show the goodness of the people of what is called this wicked world. Somehow we are better to every one than we are to God; and still He is not jealous, but seems to inspire an increase of charitable acts to each other, passing over Himself, being satisfied that what we do to the least of His brethren, we do unto Him."

The letter last quoted spoke of the visit that Mother Baptist was then expected to pay to her native land. A correspondent from the Convent of Mercy, Clonakilty, had exclaimed: "What a happiness it will be for Sisters M. Aquin and Emmanuel to see Mother M. Baptist again!" But one of these two was not to see her again on earth.

CHAPTER VII.

IN CHARGE OF THE SMALLPOX HOSPITAL.

When Mother Baptist had completed the long term of office[1] allowed to a Foundress, in May, 1867, she ceased to be Superioress and became Assistant to the new Reverend Mother, Mary Gabriel Brown; but after the shortest interval allowable, namely three years, the burden of "superiority" was laid upon her once more, as it was again and again in precisely similar circumstances until the end.

This first break was considered a proper time for the execution of a project which seemed to many of the Community useful and even necessary—namely, that Mother Baptist should visit Europe and Ireland for the purpose of getting more suitable postulants, who were by no means numerous in this newest of the United States. But the Bishop of San Francisco, Dr. Alemany, held very strict and very wise views as to the general inexpediency of such journeys, and the idea was abandoned. Mother Baptist was called, as

[1] "Six years by appointment and then the two triennials allowed by the Constitution," says the author of *Leaves from the Annals of the Sisters of Mercy*, who adds: "To the great grief of her subjects she would not accept a dispensation from Rome, which they unanimously desired."

we have already said, on the first opportunity to fill again a double term of office, from 1870 to 1876; and, when in the latter year she was again free from those responsibilities, the project of a pilgrimage to Europe was revived, but it was not carried out until nearly two years later.

Before, however, we accompany Mother Baptist on her one visit to the Old Country, we must find room for some particulars belonging to an earlier date. In the summer of 1868 there was a terrible outbreak of smallpox in San Francisco. The Sisters of Mercy offered to take charge of the patients in the Smallpox Hospital, and the offer was eagerly accepted. One of the Protestant newspapers paid at the time this tribute to the devoted services of the Sisters:—"It was almost with a feeling of shame for Protestantism that we saw, the other day, when the continual complaints of mal-administration and neglect of patients at the Variola Hospital in this city seemed to be without remedy, none of our religious denominations save the Catholic Church had any organization which could furnish intelligent help—competent, intelligent, kind, female nurses to enter that home of misery and take charge of its ministrations to the crowd of suffering humanity it contains. Those devoted Sisters of Mercy willingly presented themselves and entered on a mission of charity from which all others shrink in dismay and affright. That their presence there will have a beneficial effect none can doubt. Already the good results of their presence are apparent. Their fearless, self-sacrificing love is an honor to their Church and to their Order."

This was during the three years' interval after

Mother Baptist's first long term of office as Mother Superior; and she took advantage of her private station to claim the post of danger in the Smallpox Hospital. It was there that she wrote the following letter to the Rev. Patrick O'Neill, parish priest of Rostrevor, one of the holiest and most zealous priests that have ever sanctified the Church of Ireland. He was a true and devoted friend of the Sisters of Mercy whom he was mainly instrumental in establishing in Newry and afterwards in Rostrevor. The half parishes that Mother Baptist speaks of were Killbroney and Killowen :—

SMALLPOX HOSPITAL,
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., March 27, 1869.

DEAR REV. FATHER:—As Sister Mary Aquin is no longer in Rostrevor and as I am not sure of the name of any of the Sisters, I will take the liberty of introducing to *you* my very dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Kelly and their party, and beg you to introduce them to the inmates of your sweet little Convent.

They are travelling for the purpose of seeing the beauties of their native land, and, in my opinion, in no place could so many lovely views be found in so small a compass as in the vicinity of *Rostrevor*.

You will be glad to know that *this* Hospital has given us many opportunities for promoting the salvation of souls. I must tell you of one that was *undoubtedly* saved almost miraculously yesterday. The evening before, about seven o'clock, a carriage brought to this door a half distracted father and mother with their *only* son, aged six years, with the prevailing disorder in a virulent form. The rules of the Hospital require a *special* permit from the head officer of the Board to enable any friends to remain with the sick, so the poor mother had to leave

the child with us and go back to the city for this document. We soon saw the child was dying, and we thought he might not live through the night; and, knowing the negligence and want of faith of so many in this country, we began to fear it had never been baptized, and, not having in the hurry even ascertained the name or nationality of the parents, we had no means of judging. So at nine o'clock P. M., I gave it conditional baptism, and most providential it was I did so, as the mother returned soon after and turned out to be a most bigoted *Baptist*, but one that saw no use in baptizing a *child*, and, as she never left him one instant till he expired, we should have had no chance of pouring the regenerating waters on his head, had we deferred it one *half hour*. This reminds me of a visit we paid once, ostensibly to comfort the *mother*, but in reality to baptize the *child* who was on the point of death. Sister Mary Francis, my companion, was provided with a small bottle of water, and, by way of having better light to look at the little one, took him in her arms to the window, while I in the warmth of my sympathy pressed the mother's hands. Soon the little one was laid in its crib, the child of God, and very soon after it was, I trust, in the enjoyment of His presence. It is terrible to reflect on the hundreds calling themselves *Christians* who have never been baptized, that are met with in this country. I do not know the exact number, but think it must now be over a hundred who have received that Sacrament during this epidemic in this one hospital. The Catholics afflicted have been very few indeed, and, as a general thing, very fine men. Often remarks have been made on their edifying deaths by persons of other denominations who were present. Soon after Dr. Miller's appointment I was assisting a fine young Irishman, "James Fennell," in his last moments; he was *choking*, and in as great agony as any mortal ever suffered, his face purple and his big frame convulsed. I

thought him long speechless when the poor fellow, making a great effort, pronounced distinctly the holy names *Jesus*, *Mary* and *Joseph*. The doctor and nurse, both Protestants, were evidently much impressed but turned away and left me alone, much to my relief. I found afterwards that Sister M. Borgia, one of my companions, had explained to him the indulgence granted for repeating those holy names when dying. A German Lutheran said to me afterwards, "I see you Catholics do more for your dying than we do." And true for him, as the poor Protestants are left alone to breathe out their last, and the instant they have ceased to breathe the sheet is drawn over their faces and off they are carried to the "dead house." We get too much gratitude, I fear, from the survivors. Still, as it is not *that* we seek, I trust it will not lessen our merit. I will enclose an article in yesterday's *Pacific*, a religious journal of the Protestant stamp. You will please let James read it, as it may interest him, and I have not a second copy, and neither have I now time to write to him. I have come to the end of my paper without expressing a hope that you are enjoying tolerable health, and that your flock in both the half parishes are your comfort *here*, and that they will be your glory *hereafter*. The Sister I have mentioned above is a convert, and loses no opportunity of begging prayers for the conversion of her aged father, her brother, and two sisters. Please remember them sometimes at Mass, and I will feel very grateful; and pray for me sometimes also.

Begging your blessing, I remain, dear Rev. Father,
Ever most respectfully in Jesus Christ,
Your obedient, humble servant,
SISTER MARY B. RUSSELL,
Sister of Mercy.

One of Mother Baptist's helpers in this hard task was Sister Mary Francis Benson, who took advantage

of a bad cold to write a long letter home to the Kinsale Convent of Mercy. As (unlike the preceding letter) it is already in type in the *Leaves from the Annals of the Sisters of Mercy*, we shall quote only the opening paragraph :

" This is truly a horrible disease, so loathsome, so disgusting, so pitiable. Twice the number of patients with any other disease would not require the care and attendance that those afflicted with smallpox required. Not one spot from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot sound, the eyes of the greater number closed, and pus running from them down the cheeks ; their throats so sore that to take a drink almost chokes them ; the tongue sometimes so swollen that not a drop can pass down ; the hands so sore that they are helpless and the odor so terrible that they themselves cry out : ' O Sister, I cannot stand the smell.' The doctors say it is an unusually malignant type. It is strange that few Irish take it. The majority of the sufferers are Germans, the next in number native Americans, with a mixture of Danes, Prussians, French, Spaniards, Italians and Portuguese."

One of the patients who recovered publishes this " outpouring of a grateful heart," in *The Morning Call*, one of the San Francisco newspapers :

"What shall I say to express my sentiments regarding those ladies so heroic, those angels of mercy ?

Oh, what work they did for their suffering fellow-creatures ! I shall begin with the youngest, a noble specimen of God's work. There she might be seen from 6 A. M. till a late hour at night, going through the wards, carrying a tray with medicine, beef-tea, wine, egg-nog, always with the kind look and benevolent

smile that did more good to our hearts than anything the doctor could do for our health. May heaven's blessings descend on that soul! The next, a Spanish lady, whose kind interest in the poor sufferers was manifested by her untiring attention, going her rounds, morning, noon and night, with a pot of oil in one of her blessed hands, and a little brush in the other, and well may we thank her if there's a bit of skin left on our poor faces. The third, an old lady—a real lady in every sense of the word. Here words fail to describe her goodness and kindness to all and every one, no matter who they were. Oh mothers, whose sons died in that hospital, if you could see that blessed lady kneeling by the bedside of your darlings, as I have seen her, with uplifted eyes and hands, wafting the soul to heaven with beautiful prayers! How often did the tears rise up in my man's heart at the blessed actions I have seen her perform for the loathsome bodies of the poor sufferers!

"But these works were done for God, not for the praise of any one. I could tell a great many more divine works of these holy ladies which made the pest-house a place of happiness, but another time. I hear that most worthy lady, the Rev. Mother of St. Mary's, is now at the pest-house in place of one of the blessed souls that I know. May God protect them all—they are real Sisters of Mercy and mothers of the afflicted!"

Mother Baptist was not yet ten years in California when a letter was written, not by her or to her but about her, which has chanced to flutter back to the writer of it thirty-five years after its date. The household to which it was addressed contained two sisters

who bore the names of the two sisters of Lazarus. Mary and Martha are often alluded to as being both represented in the vocation of the Sister of Mercy. Thus Dr. Patrick Murray of Maynooth, in the best lines he ever wrote and perhaps the best that the Sister of Mercy has ever inspired, makes the Sisters say of themselves:

> "Martha's work and Mary's part
> Our endless portion still."

An irrelevant sentence is included in the beginning of the quotation for the sake of an unpublished literary appreciation which reminds me of a passage in Ruskin's "Stones of Venice." [1] "If I could only read English and had to choose, for a library narrowed by poverty, between Cary's Dante and our own original Milton, I should choose Cary without an instant's pause."

"The 'natural man' would like to chat with Dunleer much oftener, for instance, every other day. But that would never do, as Jeffrey said of Wordsworth's *Excursion*—which Aubrey de Vere informed me in confidence was the greatest work of this century except Cary's translation of Dante.

"Certain Californian dispatches passed through my hands last week. The instructions were that they should reach Dunleer *via* Arthur and Margaret. Have they reached you yet? Kate is a grand creature. The Martha and the Mary elements (nothing personal, I allude not to John's sisters but Lazarus's—have you brought out that possessive *s* with sufficient distinct-

[1] Vol. II., page 262 of the new edition.

ness? Try it again). Well, to return to Bethania, (Dr. Johnson never indulged in parenthesis but *I* do), the Martha and Mary elements are mingled in Kate in immense quantities and in most harmonious proportions. She has chosen the better part, but at the same time she manages to have the tea-table pretty comfortable. That was always her way, and it is not a bad way. It will seem past belief, but to hear her talk with such quiet faith and charity of offering up Holy Communion now and then for poor Father McEvoy, whom we at home have forgotten years ago—that and other simple touches in Kate's letter almost betrayed me into that twinge of the nose, moistening of the eyes, and puckering of the mouth, which, with the assistance of a cambric pocket-handkerchief, are known in fashionable society under the name of weeping."

At last in the year 1878 Mother Baptist was allowed to pay her one visit to Europe, as we have already said, for the purpose chiefly of procuring a supply of suitable novices. After landing at Queenstown she and her companion, Sister Mary Columba, proceeded at once to her dear old Alma Mater, St. Joseph's Convent, Kinsale, where they received the heartiest welcome. Sister Columba did not say like Cardinal Wolsey, "I have come to lay my bones among you;" but so it was to be. After accompanying Mother Baptist to several houses of the Order, she returned to Kinsale with the express purpose of performing there the last great act of dying. How she performed it we are partly told in a letter of Mother Baptist to her half-brother, Judge Hamill.

CONVENT OF OUR LADY OF MERCY,
KINSALE, April 20, '79.

MY DEAREST ARTHUR:

You will all be pained to hear I have lost my dear Sister Mary Columba. She died at four o'clock yesterday morning and I am now just expecting her two brothers, brother-in law and her sister; and I assure you I feel no little embarrassment meeting them, for they feel dear Sister's death very deeply. You know already she spent ten days in Tipperary where nothing could exceed the tender care she received. I left there and paid a hurried visit to Thurles and Limerick. While in the latter place she got Sister M. Joseph Gartlan to write to hasten my return, saying she wanted to reach Kinsale before all her strength was gone. This was her only desire, for she looked on this as next to home, and whenever particularly ill, expressed the hope that, if she were going to die, it might be here. Still neither of us really imagined she was in danger. We rested two days in Cork to break the journey, and at last reached Kinsale, two weeks ago to-morrow, just about the time we shall be laying her in the grave. On Easter Eve she was so ill we gave her up, and on the following Monday she received the last Sacraments. I wrote to inform her brother of our fears, but being from home, he did not receive my letter till Tuesday evening. Next day he was here for several hours and found her so much better apparently than he expected that he went off quite relieved. On Friday I saw her end was approaching, and so wrote to him again, and he had my letter in time to prepare him for the telegram announcing her death. About half-past four on Friday she missed me, (I had gone to dinner) and sent for me, and, on my coming in, she embraced me so lovingly, and said: "Don't leave me any more, Mother. You won't have me long now, the great struggle with death is beginning; pray for me, pray for me, and get prayers for me. You won't fret, Mother;

you know God's will is best; I am not sorry to die, God's will be done. Poor Michael and the girls—God help them and *He will.*" This was about all she said, except to ask for Reverend Mother, and, when she came, she begged for *prayers* and *prayers;* and, when Mother was saying a few kind words, she said so earnestly, "O, don't mind me but pray." I tell you all this to secure your prayers and those of dear Mary, Arthur, Alice, Emily and dear old Kitty. I would be so glad and so grateful if you would all go to Holy Communion, and offer it for her soul on the third Sunday after Easter, the Patronage of St. Joseph.

During the eight or ten hours preceding her death, Sister could not speak, and, as far as we could see, was not even conscious, at least could make no sign of knowing what was said around, though she may have heard it all the time; we were saying to each other it ought to be a lesson to us all, to do all we can for our souls before death comes; for too often the struggle is such as to render it impossible to do much at that awful hour. Well, dear Arthur, all this may not be very interesting to you, but it occupies my mind at present, and I could speak of nothing else. Now that I am no longer obliged to calculate *when* my sister would be strong enough for the journey, I believe I may say pretty determinedly that we shall sail, please God, on the 30th, and I am arranging to get a young Sister to bear me company, though I might go with one of my "recruits" by letting her enter here, even one week before our departure, but I think it is better to get one who has been some time in a convent. I will go now overland, as the chief reason for preferring the long sea-voyage was that it agreed better with Sister Columba. I hope, therefore, to reach San Francisco about the 24th of May. I will write to some one and beg whoever it may be to inform the rest of my save arrival, as I know you will all be anxious. I enclose an Agnus Dei and marker for each of you with my fondest love. You

always have my prayers and deep affection, and if I never saw Mary, Alice, Emily and Arthur John, for *your* sake they would have the same, but I both know and love them, though I did not see very much of them ; and I hope dear Arthur John will get really strong and have everything that the fondest heart could desire. Give each my love most affectionately.

Ever, dear Arthur, Your affectionate sister,

MARY B. RUSSELL,
Sister of Mercy.

CHAPTER VIII.

BACK TO THE GOLDEN GATE.

BEFORE accompanying Mother Baptist back to the distant scene of her life work, we shall venture to note one quaint little indication of the impression she made during her home tour. Among the convents that she visited was the spacious and most efficient convent of her Order at Dundalk, where her aunt is still a Sister of Mercy, the sole survivor of her generation. One of the persons who called upon her during her stay at St. Malachy's was the excellent local physician, the late Dr. John Gartlan, a relative and lifelong friend of her kinsfolk, who had come south from Killough and made that prosperous town their home. This warm-hearted and clever man was a devoted admirer of the sitting member for the borough, the last that it was ever to return to Parliament before being disfranchised as below the new limit of population. This M. P. was Mother Baptist's brother, then Charles Russell, Q. C., and the doctor's high esteem for him lends energy to this expression of his opinion of our Irish-American nun: "She is as much above that London chap as I am above my Johnnie," namely, his old coachman, for whose intellectual powers he had no great respect, especially in comparison with his own.

Sister Mary Columba having "gone home" by a shorter route, Mother Baptist was left free to hasten her return to California. Members of a family are counselled to keep up certain social formalities as a help to the maintenance of charity, and in religious families such observances cannot be overlooked. The Sisters at Kinsale did better than that Lord Mayor who, at a farewell banquet given to the British Association of Science, said: "A week ago I welcomed you to this ancient city with a *cead mile faile*, and now I take leave of you with the same idiomatic expression." A hundred thousand welcomes certainly greeted Mother Baptist's arrival, but not her departure. In their parting address the Kinsale Sisters say, after many loving words: "You have during your too brief stay with us endeared yourself still more to your loving sisters in your old convent home. Your visit, beloved Mother, has been indeed a memorable one for you and for us. The saving impress of the Cross, the pledge of our dear Lord's special love has marked it, and since He has been pleased to take your beloved child and companion to Himself, may we not hope that she will join us in interceding for her cherished and devoted Mother? Her grave will form another link to bind us still more closely to our Sisters in the far West, and, when breathing a prayer for the dear departed, *they* will not be forgotten. And you, beloved Mother, will ever be remembered by us all where remembrance is best—at the foot of the altar. There we shall ask the Divine Prisoner of Love to bless and reward you; and during our visits to Him, especially while you and your little band are on the wide ocean, we shall fervently beseech Him to

guide and protect you and bring you safe to the loving ones who anxiously await your return."

To these affectionate words were added what an old writer calls "the mellifluous meeters of poesie," but the farewell song is not as quotable as the song of welcome that greeted Mother Baptist at the other end of her second and last journey from the Old Head of Kinsale to San Francisco and the Golden Gate. Space allows us to give only the opening lines of this long and beautiful poem.

The rapture of this meeting
No parting fears dispel;
The gladness of our greeting
No words may fitly tell;
And in our hearts no other,
No sweeter thought may reign
Than this:—"Our dearest Mother
Is with us once again!"
The long suspense is over,
The pain of waiting past—
Our loved and loving rover
Is safely here at last.
Our heavenward-wafted pleading
Hath ever followed thee
When thou, dear one, wert speeding
Across the crested sea.
We bade Love bind the ocean
With fetters of His will
And calm its wild commotion
With tender "Peace be still!"
And to our fond petition
He sent his answer sweet,
And safely on their mission
He led thy pilgrim feet,

Until they trod serenely
Their own dear native Isle,
Whose valleys, glist'ning greenly,
Returned thy greeting smile.

Between the prose and the poetical addresses just quoted, Mother Baptist conducted her band of recruits over ocean and continent, and no doubt drilled them quietly on the way. They were about twice as numerous as the original missionary band, in which she was leader, too; and an additional postulant joined them *en route*, to whom was assigned the patron of the deceased Sister Columba and who was destined to be Mother Baptist's immediate successor in the office of Superior. The younger nun gives this account of their meeting and of their first journey together. "On Sunday, May 18, 1879, I first saw Mother Baptist Russell. Her first greeting was 'Oh, I know you.' She had seen two sisters of mine who were Sisters of Mercy in Tralee, and recognized me from them. She won my heart at once, inspiring an affection that lasted for the twenty happy years that I spent under her.

"This meeting was in Omaha, on her way back from Ireland, where my sisters had almost accidentally brought me into communication with her. The next day at noon I left Omaha with Mother Baptist and her companions. Her kindness and thoughtfulness in the cars were extreme—always thinking of others before herself, waiting on them, procuring little comforts for them. We did not feel the almost five days' travel. The dear Mother beguiled the time with incidents of her early life in California, or of her recent visit to Ireland and England. Our party had a

drawing-room car all to itself, and Reverend Mother asked each of us (eleven in all) to tell a story, to sing, or recite. While crossing the Rockies the train moves very slowly. We were seated around Mother Baptist, asking for our names in religion. I asked for Patrick, but she said, 'I am sorry you cannot have *that* as we have a Sister Patricia already, and a black novice, Sister Mary Patrick.' One of our companions looked frightened, saying she did not know they had negroes in the convent in San Francisco. Oh, how the dear Mother enjoyed this and spoke of it during the rest of the trip. Of course the phrase black novice refers to the change of black veil for white veil after Profession. When I addressed her as Reverend Mother she said, 'I am not Reverend Mother,' but added with a sweet smile that I should think would win any heart, 'but have a very good chance of being such on my return.' As a fact she was in office every time that she could according to rule since 1855. I thought her so wonderful to be able so say from memory the Litany of the Saints, and the long Litany for the dead, and the one for a happy death with all the prayers attached to them:[1] she used to say them at dusk every evening. On Friday, May 23, we reached our destination to the great joy of all. Our dear Mother was delighted to be home again. So here I am ever since and every day of my life I thank God for having been allowed to associate with Mother Baptist so long and to have known her so intimately."

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[1] In this she took after her mother who had off by heart the Rosary of Jesus, the Jesus Psalter and other long prayers that have now gone out of fashion.

Mother Baptist's first letter after her return was begun on "July 2, 1879," but not finished till the 19th. "You know from others that I am safe at home since the 23d of May. Next morning at 10 o'clock I got the keys of the house"—something like being appointed Vicar Capitular during the interregnum before the election of a new Superior—"and the following Thursday I was made *Boss*. So you see I was *just in time*." She ends a well-filled letter with "a thousand loves to each dear Sister in all the houses"—namely in Newry Convent of Mercy and its branches.

Mother Baptist thus after her European trip settled down quietly to another long term of office. All testimonies tend to show that she had altogether exceptional gifts for wise, gentle and firm administration and government; a wonderfully effective combination of the *suaviter in modo* with the *fortiter in re*. One of her most striking characteristics as a Superior was her calmness, her peace, her self-possession, even in the most untoward circumstances. Part of her secret she reveals in the counsel given to a Sister whom she had placed in charge of a branch house and who was evidently tried a good deal by one of her subjects:—

"Don't on any account let her shortcomings or anything of that kind bother or disturb you in the least, like a good child. God leaves each one of us our free will, and we are accountable for ourselves. See how even the immediate presence and personal intercourse with our Lord did not keep the unhappy Judas right. So do what you can, but keep your mind not alone peaceful but joyous, and the more joyous the better for yourself and all."

She ends this letter with the following very com-

monplace advice: "See that all the Sisters have heavy, good shoes, and everything necessary to keep them warm and dry, and keep a good fire. Call for a little music occasionally, or play yourself."

After the date that we have reached in her story, Mother Baptist was never again to see Ireland or any of her dear kinsfolk except the elder of her brothers. On the 14th of August, 1883, Mr. Charles Russell started from Liverpool to pay his first visit to America. His travelling companions were Lord Coleridge, whom he was to succeed as Chief Justice of England, Mr. Justice Hannen, before whom he was to defend Parnell, then the leader of the Irish people, Mr. Patrick Martin, Q. C., M. P. for Kilkenny, and Mr. James Bryce, M. P., whose visit to the States led to the composition of an important work, "Impressions of America." Another of the party, the one with whom we are now concerned, also took notes of what he saw, but only for the gratification of his family at home. It was certainly characteristic that amidst all the fatigue of travelling these pencilled notes went unfailingly week by week across the Atlantic.

None of these were read at home with keener interest than the pages relating to Mother Baptist, when her brother, leaving Lord Coleridge and his other travelling companions in the Eastern States, made his way to California and the Queen of the West. Without venturing to ask permission we transcribe at this point a few passages from the diary just as it was hastily jotted down in pencil at the time. San Francisco was not reached by rail over the Rockies, as in Mother Baptist's second journey to it, but by steamer, as in her first. Not now, however,

from Panama in the south, but from the north, by Vancouver and the Pacific railroad across Canada.

"As we got farther south, the outlines of the shore were bolder, the bluffs higher and occasionally very fine, reminding me greatly of Ireland, say the coast of Antrim, but nothing, I think, like so fine as the Antrim coast.

"As we were finishing dinner, our courteous Captain, rising from the table, said, 'Gentlemen, I hope you will come on deck in a few minutes, for we shall soon be passing through the Golden Gate.'

"Presently up we went. We were approaching the entrance to this the finest harbor I ever saw. On each side were light-houses and also strong fortifications for the defense of the port; and a little further to the south was a great rock known as Seal Rock on which literally thousands of seals hourly and daily disport themselves.

"On, on we go, and, now fairly through the entrance, we see the straggling lights of this the greatest City of the South. But the Golden Gate—where is it? Why so called? I look eagerly forward, but all I see in the dull light of the rapidly closing day is a murky, smoky atmosphere, such as one sees in the busy towns of Lancashire. Why the Golden Gate? In my perplexity I turn back to the west which we are leaving, and I need no further explanation. The revelation is made to me. The sun has gone down but left the traces of his bright golden glory behind him, and there between the two headlands which form the pillars (themselves gilt by the brightness all around them) we see only one blaze of rich golden light from side to side. It is well called the Golden Gate. A turn in

our course presently shuts out this brightness from our view, and we discern in the dull light a number of vessels anchored in what seems and is in fact an immense anchorage ground. We thread our way cautiously amongst them, and, finally landed at Broadway wharf, we are taken possession of by the employés of the Palace Hotel, San Francisco, and in its hospitable portals we speedily find ourselves. I will by-and-by tell you what San Francisco is like.

"*Tuesday, September 18, 1883.*

"My impressions of yesterday evening of the beauty of this place were quite confirmed this morning. We arrived at the Palace Hotel and found it all ablaze and a band playing in the atrium or courtyard which was crowded.

"Our rooms had been engaged and were the best in the house—on the sixth story! They were really very fine, large, lofty, with bathroom and dressing-room to each—in fact, very complete suites of rooms. In the morning we found we had a distant view of the Bay and across to Goat Island over the intervening city.

"'Frisco is certainly beautifully situated, and beautifully laid out. Sheltered from the West by the southern arm of the Bay, it rests upon a succession of hills—many of them very steep—which seem to run almost in regular parallel lines.

"Though much smaller in population than Chicago, it is a much more taking city. There is also a great appearance of business activity. Altogether, after New-York, it is the finest city I have seen here.

"The system of tramcars is the most perfect I have seen. Even the steepest hills are charged by steam trams worked on the endless-chain principle; and you can travel from one end of the city to the other for five cents. This is the only cheap thing, this tramcar travelling, which I have yet come across in the United States.

"I went early to St. Mary's Hospital, situated on the top of Rincon Hill. I was being shown into a parlor when Kate approached—looking on the whole very well and strong, and exactly as she looked when in Great Britain four years ago—not looking a day older.

"The Sisters of Mercy were not the first religious sisterhood in 'Frisco, but they have since their arrival, about the year 1854, made marked progress. Outside the convent and outside the Catholic community the noble work they have done is gratefully acknowledged.

"On Rincon Hill they have a large hospital, a work school and a home for aged women.

"They have altogether five branches in 'Frisco and in Sacramento, and have in charge several schools. They receive no aid from the State funds, and no compensation for the important teaching services which they render. Neither do any other of the Catholic schools. In this important particular Catholic schools are much better off in England.

"Kate inquired very anxiously about everybody at home and I gave her the fullest particulars I could. She complains that, although they have been promised to her, she has not yet received the photos of Margaret, Lily, May and Bertie. This should be seen to. I am sure also she would like photos of little Willie and Alice.

"I also saw Mary Martin in her nun's dress. (She used to be a companion to my mother.) She is a bright, cheery little nun.

* * *

"So far as I can gather, there is no place in the United States in which on the whole the Catholic body, or in other words the Irish Catholic body, stands so well as in San Francisco in point of religious organization, education, mercantile, social and political position.

"I spent all yesterday afternoon and the greater part of to-day with Kate. At St. Mary's Hospital, the children

of their schools—bright, healthy, intelligent-looking children they were—went through certain calisthenic and musical exercises, very pleasant to see and to hear. As to the latter I was rather surprised when the pianist who accompanied the singers struck up the English National Anthem of Dr. John Ball. 'God Save the Queen' here in a Republican country! However, my surprise soon ceased for the accompanying song was an ode to America, entitled 'America,' and which as a national air ranks close after 'The Star Spangled Banner.'

"I also went through the hospital wards. They are bright, cheery, and wonderfully neat and clean. They have wards for the poor, and also for those who can pay for higher class accommodation. Their patients are frequently Protestants—indeed Kate says she knows the Protestant Bishop very well from the fact of his frequently coming to visit his co-religionists and subjects in the wards.

"Later we drove (that is, Kate, Sister Mary Aquin Martin, James Gartlan and myself) in the convent carriage and pair to the Penitents' Home and Reformatory at Potrero avenue on the outskirts of the city.

"The establishment at Potrero was most interesting, and it is worth noting that, as regards the inmates of the Reformatory school, these are committed to the care of the good Sisters by the State authorities who pay for each child or at least contribute to the support of each child.

"I think I have already mentioned poor old Miss Kate Russell, one of the three sisters formerly of Elm Hall, Dublin, who lived many years in Cincinnati. She is the last survivor. She is a ladylike, handsome old person who is ending her days with Kate in cheerfulness and peace. She was delighted to see me and seemed to feel the leave-taking a good deal. She thought me very like Kate, but my face seemed to awaken old memories, some sweet and some bitter, no doubt, that probably long had

slept. Poor dear, old soul, God has anyway given her a quiet evening for her life.

"One interesting spot, and a sad one in some sort, too, is the Sisters' graveyard at Potrero. Here on the bright hillside, under the shades of the maple tree and the cotton wood, rest nearly one-half of that devoted band whom Kate led, now nearly thirty years ago, from the old world to the new, carrying the Cross with them.

* * *

"I left poor Kate very sad, poor soul, but greatly pleased at having had the old land brought closer to her by my presence. God bless her and all the Sisterhood, who promised to pray very steadily for me and for mine. By the way, as Kate was the Reverend Mother, I was promptly dubbed 'Uncle,' but without the 'Reverend.'"

Here our extracts, more copious than we intended, end. We may join to them a still more domestic report contained in a letter from R. M. to Mother Emmanuel, dated Nov. 15, 1883: "Clara says Charles looks exceedingly well and healthy after his trip, and says he feels quite lazy about taking up the heap of work that was waiting for him in London. He brought to each of us some little present from Reverend Mother of San Francisco. Mine was a very beautifully worked pair of scapulars.'"

An account of this meeting between brother and sister is also given by the Sister in a short letter, which we may quote in full:

St. Mary's Hospital, S. F.,
California, Sept. 21, '83.

My Dear Matthew:—Before the day ends, I must write to you: first, as it is your feast, and we have all prayed for your every happiness as fervently as we could; and, secondly, to let you know dear Charles is actually

in California. He wrote me a couple of weeks ago from Winnipeg that I might expect to see him if nothing unforeseen occurred before the end of the month. On last Tuesday I happened to be in the parlor, when in walked a gentleman with gloves. "This is not a Californian," said I to myself. And lo! raising my eyes, I saw Charles, and, you will be glad to hear, looking remarkably well—bronzed, no doubt, by his travels in this warm climate. He had arrived in this city the night before from Puget's Sound, by steamer, of course, and I think, like myself, the sea does not agree with him, for he was a little upset by the voyage and called on our doctor, who merely prescribed certain regimen. Cousin Kate was delighted more than I can explain, to see Charles, and quite pleased to find the sweet, gentle expression of countenance so different from what his photograph would lead one to expect. He sat an hour or more, and then went to call on James Gartlan and Joseph Jennings. D. J. Oliver, one of our best and wealthiest Catholics, intended to have Charles his guest, but he had already settled himself with his friend at the Palace Hotel and did not care to make a change. Mr. Oliver was watching the list of passengers expected overland, by which route we supposed Charles would come, and he intended to meet him; but he got here unknown to us all. He had calls from a half dozen gentlemen that night, and next morning, at 6.30, he drove in an open carriage to the Cliff House (via Golden Gate Park) where he and party had breakfast, and saw all that is to be seen there, in the way of seals, etc., etc., and got here at noon. He and I spent a quiet hour together, telling me of all at home, the *little ones*, perhaps, getting an undue amount of time. I thought he had plenty of time at his disposal, and the Sisters had lunch prepared for him in the Community Room, when we found he had arranged to start at three for Yosemite Valley and was to lunch with Mr. Martin before, so we had to let him go

L of C.

after a hurried visit to the Home or at least to a part of it. In one room the tears came to his eyes, when he saw dear Mamma's obituary hanging in a central position—the room belongs to Mary Devlin who lived at Mr. Greer's and knew Mamma, and Sisters M. Aquin and Emmanuel well. He expects to return on Tuesday, and I must get one day to show him the asylum, schools, etc. The weather is pretty warm at present, and I fear where Charles is now it must be extremely hot. It is too bad he is so hurried. I hope he won't be half dead from fatigue, running at such a rate.

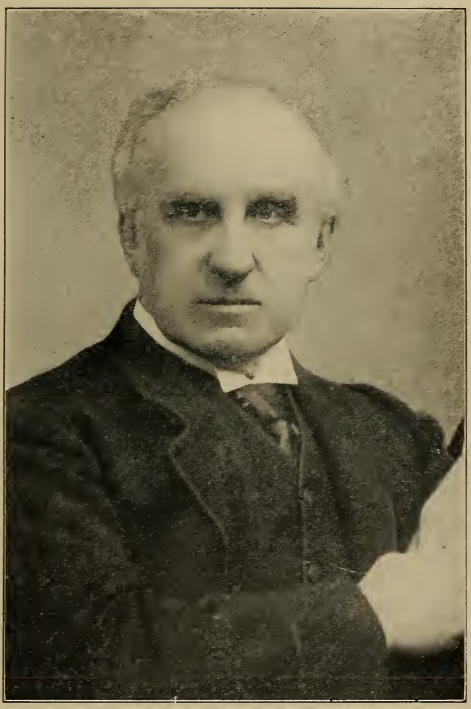
Now, my dear Matthew, may God bless you for ever and ever. Pray for me.

Your affectionate sister,
M. B. Russell,
Sister of Mercy.

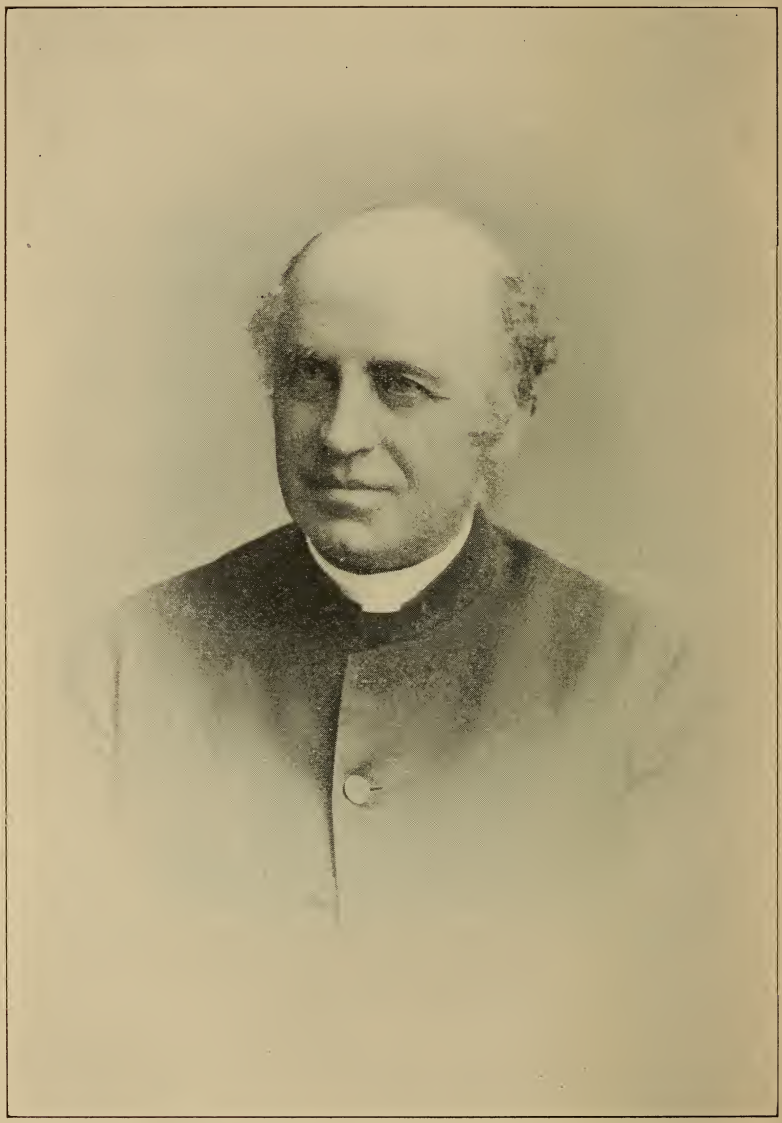
To this same exciting event in the holy exile's life there is an allusion in a later letter of hers. She was a diligent reader of *The Irish Monthly*, which, in February, 1884, introduced thus its recommendation of Mr. James Britten's "Young Collector's Handbook of Flowering Plants."

"A recent traveller, whose unpublished notes would form a delightful volume, makes in one place the following remark: 'Several times during this trip I found myself regretting that I did not know at least a little smattering of both botany and geology. Learn from this, O ye young! while there is yet time, to cultivate extended tastes. They will be a pleasure to you always, but especially a pleasure and an added interest when later in life you come to travel.'"

Writing on the 23d of March, Mother Baptist orders several copies of Mr. Britten's little book, and says: "I suspect the 'recent traveller' alluded to at page



LORD RUSSELL OF KILLOWEN, CHIEF JUSTICE OF ENGLAND.



THE REV. MATTHEW RUSSELL, S.J.

ninety-eight, of the February *Irish Monthly*, who recommends the young to study botany as a source of additional pleasure when travelling, must be *Charles*. No doubt an insight into the workings of nature in the vegetable kingdom does add much to the pleasure of every observing mind whether travelling or not."

Her guess, of course, was correct; and her thoughts, no doubt, travelled in the same direction if she read a "Pigeonhole Paragraph" in the same magazine for May, 1891, which might have been quoted in the opening pages of the present sketch as an illustration of the wholesome discipline of those young people's Killowen life. I venture to give it now out of its place, moral and all:

"Half a dozen children, girls and boys, once lived very happily in an unpretentious but comfortable house, which was separated by only a couple of fields —their own fields—from the sea-shore. Could it be called the sea-shore? In reality it was the shore of a large Irish bay, where the sea had room enough to behave like a real sea, yet not too wildly or too Atlantically.

"The mother of these children used, once or twice a year, to travel to Dublin—which, to the children, seemed as far away as Chicago seems now. Every time she came back it seemed as if they had lost their mother and found her again.

"To increase the warmth of her welcome the wise mother took care not to return empty handed, but to bring a gift for each of her young people. On one of these occasions there was a cloud over the sunshine. The excellent governess, who was the mother's vicegerent, and who was always treated with the fullest

confidence and respect, felt it her duty to report unfavorably on one of the boys. May God reward her for discharging a painful duty, not giving in weakly at the end and hushing it all up in the joy of the mother's home-coming! And may God reward the good mother for not making light of the offence or seizing on some expedient for receiving the culprit back at once into favor! No, the other gifts were distributed—one of them was 'Uncle Buncle's True and Instructive Stories about Animals, Insects, and Plants'—but the gift intended for the young evil-doer, whose transgression was not very wicked, was not merely withheld for a time, but never bestowed upon him. The credit of his subsequent career was, perhaps, partly attributable to the firmness and wisdom of his early discipline, of which this is a sample.

"But 'these things are said for a parable.' The incident may illustrate God's way of dealing with us, His poor children. He leaves Himself to a great extent at our mercy. How many graces may He have designed for me and never conferred upon me for reasons similar to those which kept back forever the companion-volume to 'Uncle Buncle's True and Instructive Stories about Animals, Insects, and Plants!' Bartoli, in his *Life of St. Ignatius*, quotes this saying of his: 'God would readily bestow very many graces upon us if our perverse will did not place an obstacle to His liberality.' What a pity! It might be well for us, each of us, in his own heart, to go deeper than would be becoming in this place into this sad subject of God's ungiven gifts, and to ask the Sacred Heart to save us from the consequences of past folly."

As I have here perpetrated a flagrant anachronism

in going back over more than twice "twenty golden years ago," I may, also, before taking up again the thread of our story, record another curious little incident belonging to the same remote past, which the following paragraph in a recent *Westminster Gazette* called to mind :

"The Lord Chief Justice was at Southampton yesterday to witness the sailing of the *Kildonan Castle*, which is taking his son, Lieutenant Russell, R. A., to the Cape. In describing the farewell the *Daily Mail* says that the parting, although father and son evidently both felt it keenly, was not without its humorous side. When the siren had hoarsely ordered 'All ashore,' Lord Russell of Killowen, from the quay-side, did his best to attract his son's attention, but in vain. Growing desperate, the Lord Chief Justice placed two fingers to his mouth and blew a shrill whistle with an ease which a boy might have envied. Lieutenant Russell, recognizing the signal, came to the taffrail smiling."

Now it happens that this is a case of history repeating itself; for what the newspapers which retailed this very unimportant incident termed, "the L. C. J's whistle-call," had been used by him nearly sixty years before for this very purpose of attracting some person's attention at a distance. One evening he and his little brother strolled to the shore of Carlingford Lough along with a white-haired peasant boy of the same age who grew up to be more than eight feet in height and some four hundred pounds in weight and to gain fame and fortune by being exhibited as Murphy, the Irish giant, over all the countries of Europe except Ireland —for he would never consent to make a show of him-

self in his own country. Well, this little fair-haired[1] boy and the two brothers plucked a store of the choicest ears of wheat in one of the fields near the beach and made their way out to a large fishing-boat which was anchored in the Glarry Hole and which the retreating tide had left accessible to little feet that had no objection to being wet. They ensconced themselves snugly in the bottom of the boat, and, between telling stories and eating wheat, amused themselves so well that they forgot where they were till the returning tide had completely surrounded them. Probably they could have waded safely through the waves when they first perceived their situation; but they were afraid and remained in the boat till the tide had reached its full, leaving the castaways far out at sea, as it seemed to them. They were hardly in any danger, for the boat was securely anchored; but it was dark night and high tide and wild enough before some men rowed out to their rescue, having been made aware of their plight by means of that shrill whistling which boys

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1 Both his parents were of quite ordinary stature. He died of smallpox, at Marseilles, towards the end of his 27th year; but his body was brought home to Killowen, to be buried in the old Kilbroney graveyard near Rostrevor. The spot is marked by a large Celtic cross bearing this inscription: "Of your charity pray for the soul of Patrick Murphy, Killowen (the Irish giant), to whose memory this monument has been erected by a few friends and admirers. R. I. P." Then follows this extract from the Parish Register: "This young man was admittedly the tallest man in the world at the time of his death, his exact height being eight feet one inch. He was born 15th June, 1834, and died at Marseilles, 18th April, 1862. His remains were embalmed, brought home, and interred in Kilbroney graveyard, 18th June, 1862.—J. McKenna, C. C."

are fond of producing by the combined efforts of their lips and fingers, and which a half century later enabled the young artillery officer starting for the war to get a last glimpse of his father among the crowd on Southampton quay. It is, perhaps, useful to add that, instead of being made much of—as might have been the case with weak-minded parents—the rescued mariners were treated as criminals, and, next day, a gentle flogging with a not very formidable substitute for a cat-o'-nine-tails was administered to the responsible leader of the party. The historic muse remembers what was the precise instrument employed on this solitary (and surely not very grievous) occasion, but shrinks from confiding it to the printer.

I am not aware that Murphy, the Irish giant, ever visited San Francisco, like the oldest of his comrades in peril. The visit, from which we have strayed so far, was the last glimpse that Mother Baptist was to get of any of her kindred on earth. Lord Russell, indeed, paid a second visit to the United States, in August, 1896, at the invitation of the American Bar Association, to whom he delivered an address on International Law and Arbitration at Saratoga Springs, August 20. On this occasion, however, he was not accompanied only by men like Lord Coleridge, Sir James Hannen, Mr. Bryce, M. P., and Sir Horace Davey, as in his first trip. From these he could separate, as he could separate from Sir Frank Lockwood and Mr. Crackanthorpe, Q.C.—his travelling companions on the second occasion. But, in 1896, he brought also with him his wife and one of his daughters; and he knew that they would be unequal to the additional fatigue of the second long journey that he had himself made in 1883.

CHAPTER IX.

SOME INTERESTING LETTERS.

MOTHER MARY BAPTIST'S visit to Europe may be taken as dividing her American life into two parts, and that with the latter half we have now to deal. Like the first she began it as superior,[1] as she mentions in a letter addressed to "My dear Mother Mary Emmanuel de Sales Vincent, and all in the three houses"—namely, Newry, Rostrevor and Lurgan :

"A joint letter is best, as I shall not have much time, and I ought to have written long before this. You know, from others, that I am safe at home since 23d of May. Next morning, at 10 o'clock, I got the keys of the house and the following Thursday was made *Boss*. So you see I was *just in time*. I found dear Sister Margaret Mary

[1] To the English translation of a singularly edifying book, "Mirror of the Virtues of the Mother Mary of St Euphrasia Pelletier, Foundress of the Congregation of the Good Shepherd" (London : Burns & Oates, 1888), is appended a "Short Account of Her Work in the United Kingdom." Miss Joanna Reddan, with whom our readers are acquainted as Mother de Sales, the first Sister of Mercy to die in California, is properly described as Foundress of the House of the Good Shepherd in Limerick ; but the writer is not equally correct when she goes on to tell that "Miss Reddan made her profession as a Sister of Mercy in Kinsale and, finally, was sent thence as Superioress to found a house of her Order in California." The reader of our sketch is aware that the facts are still more edifying—that Mother de Sales' niece, who was her "Reverend Mother," did not appoint her superior of the little missionary band, but placed her under one who had not half her age or experience.

wonderfully changed for the few months I was gone; but she has rallied since and may linger months yet. She came over here for the Election but did not venture to the Chapel. The Archbishop visited her afterwards in the Infirmary and gave her permission to receive Holy Communion twice a week without having kept her fast. I told him how good your Holy Bishop is to your sick, but he only smiled. Dr. Delany only allows it twice a week also.

* * *

"We have a poor cripple here who asked to be enrolled in the scapular on the Feast of the Visitation. The Sister expressed some surprise that he had never been enrolled before. 'Well, now, Sister,' said the poor fellow, 'how could I wear the Scapular of the Blessed Virgin and I telling the boys the cigars I was selling were the best that could be got, and I knowing they weren't? And I used to turn the spotted side of the oranges down, too.' Had not the poor fellow a nice conscience? I think I told you of some of the out-of the-way titles by which I am occasionally addressed. Since I returned I got a letter directed to the 'Virgin Mother in Jesus Christ'; *that* was diametrically opposite to '*Baptist Russell, Esq.*,' I got on another occasion."

After several pages of domestic gossip, profoundly interesting to her correspondents, she ends with "a thousand loves to each dear Sister in all the houses." The religious vocation had evidently not killed all kindly feeling in Mother Baptist. She was not to be classed with those whom St. Paul accused of being *sine affectione*.

To this second division of Mother Baptist's California life belongs, almost exclusively, the large mass of

her correspondence which has been placed in my hands. In that way, at least, she revisited constantly the dear island that lay far away over thousand leagues of land and sea. Writing on May 3, 1881, she says :

"I believe that the population of Ireland is less than it has ever been. I am sorry. I love my native land more and more each day."

And her successor writes of her in some notes that she has furnished to me :

"She loved Ireland with a deep, undying love. She felt keenly for its poor, and frequenty contributed to the relief of distressed districts ; and, when she was unable to do anything herself, she interested others in the good work. She took particular delight in praising any one who did any good for Ireland. Anything published about Lady Aberdeen, she always read aloud for the Sisters ; and many a time her fervent *may God bless her* must have done that lady good. No one ever rendered her a service that that same fervent prayer was not offered up for them."

I have just now implied that Mother Baptist made her letter writing a work of charity, zeal and edification. Her letters were full of facts that tended "to the A. M. D. G.—" as holy people sometimes say, who are not fully acquainted with the grammatical significance of those initials. It will not, I trust, be indiscreet to give as a specimen the following account, received at first hand, of the conversion of General Rosecrans and his brother, afterwards Bishop of Columbus. It is contained in a letter which Mother Baptist wrote on the thirtieth of October, 1880 :

"Our Vicar General came to me last Tuesday to ask me to entertain for a few hours the Ursuline Nuns, who were expected to arrive the following day, en route for Santa Rosa, where they have purchased a house and three acres and are going to open a boarding school. We were, of course, happy to do so and prepared a good lunch in the Community Room for them, and General and Mrs. Rosecrans, young Mr. and Miss Rosecrans, Father Prendergast the Vicar-General himself. One of the Sisters was a daughter of the General, and that was the reason of the whole family's being here. While the ladies were refreshing themselves after the long journey by the application of soap and water, I had an opportunity of getting into conversation with the gentlemen and having heard that the General owed his conversion to the politeness of a peddler, I had the curiosity to ask was it so. He said that, though that settled the point, he had often thought of it before while studying the military profession at West Point. He then told me that he and a brother officer were one day walking, the road was in a horrible condition and, at one point where it was particularly bad, a plank had been laid for foot passengers. Just as he and his companion got on it they perceived a poor man coming towards them and nearly half-way over, but as soon as he saw them back he walked to allow them to pass. The General turned to thank him for his politeness, and, seeing he carried a peddler's pack, asked what he had. The man answered: 'I am selling Catholic books.' It seems that the General had often heard that Catholics had some dark secrets which they kept for themselves, so he said to his companion, 'We have heard awful things of these Papists, let us see what they have to say for themselves.' So saying he bought *The Catholic Christian Instructed* for himself and some other book for his friend, and you will say they studied their lesson well when I tell you the second officer is now a Paulist Father, Rev.

George Deshon, and General Rosecrans is ever since a practical Catholic and has brought up his children the same; his eldest son died a Paulist Father a couple of years ago, and two of his daughters joined the Ursulines. He was married at the time he became a Catholic, and his wife felt his change of religion deeply and seemed determined to supply or rather atone for his defection by increased zeal; but before many years she, too, opened her eyes to the true light and goes hand in hand with her husband in all good deeds.

"Now about the Bishop. He was much younger than his brother and, at College, when he embraced the Catholic Faith. After leaving College he visited his brother, who wisely refrained from bringing the subject of religion much before him, but there were plenty of good Catholic books around, and the young man read them and they had the desired effect, but he was of a silent, thoughtful turn and said little or nothing. One day the General saw him apparently much amused at something he was reading and asked him what it was. The other answered, 'Spalding's Critique on D'Aubigney's History of the Reformation, and I have just come to the story we used to be told of Luther's never once even hearing of the Bible until he accidentally met one and the reading of it opened his eyes to the errors of Popery. I confess it always struck me as a ridiculous story, but this writer tears it to pieces in style!' Another day when they feared he had met some accident when boating and were rejoicing at seeing him safely on shore again, his brother said, 'To be candid, Sylvester, I was worried about your soul more than your body, for I think you know too much for it to be safe for you to die as you are,' and sure enough he did know too much to remain a Protestant any longer, and the very next day when the family were going to Mass he said to his brother, 'You had better ask that priest if he would come and examine if I know enough to be bap-

tized.' This is all I had time to hear for the ladies returned and other things had to be discussed.

"But though conversions to the Faith are delightful, conversions from sin are still better, so I will ask a fervent Pater and Ave for a young man who died on Thursday last, having within a couple of days, made a general confesssion, *been married*, anointed and received the Holy Viaticum."

CHAPTER X.

LOVE OF THE POOR AND AFFLICTED.

I AM not sure of the exact form of the saying which tells us that the happiest reign has the shortest history. In like manner a uniformly holy and useful life does not furnish the vicissitudes which make a biography interesting. Some poet has summarized in a couplet a career that was in reality more praiseworthy than many a one full of the most striking incidents :

"That he was born, it cannot be denied—
He ate, drank, slept, wrote deathless works and died."

In the case of our Sister of Mercy "wrought" should be substituted for "wrote." She nearly completed her threescore years and ten, each day of all these years full of good solid work for God and His poor human creatures ; but one day was like another, and the beauty of her life lay rather in the perfection with which she fulfilled her duties and the quiet cheerful perseverance with which she gave herself to the realization of her high ideals from childhood till her latest breath. As Mother Columba, her successor, says : "Her life was simple in the extreme. It was

her beautiful way of doing things that constituted their worth. Her deeds of charity and kindness will never be numbered in this world."

Even as a child, she had shown special love for the aged and for the poor. I distinctly remember, through a vista of nearly sixty years, the positive delight and affection that shone upon her face as she looked at a poor old mendicant and his wife, to whom she had given a bowl of good soup. Her girlish theory and practice in those primeval days had a large share in inspiring twenty years afterward "The Poor Man's Knock," of which the first stanzas may be quoted :

'Tis many a year, a score and more,
Since a little boy in blue frock
Would run to open the great hall-door,
Whose latch he scarce could reach from the floor—
"It is only a poor man's knock."

The harsh word "beggar" was under ban
In that quaint old house by the sea ;
And little Blue Frock's announcement ran :
"'Tis a poor little girl—'tis a poor blind man—
Poor woman with children three."

And when our little boy would say,
"There's a poor person at the door,"
The sister who carried the keys that day
From a willing mother leave would pray
To give to him of her store.

The "poor person" fared none the worse if the little housekeeper for the week happened to be the future Mother Baptist.

So was it from the beginning; and till the end her grief was that she had not enough to give to the poor, that she was unable to relieve their wants as generously as her heart yearned to do. In her visitation of the sick there were thousands and thousands of scenes like this, reported as follows by one of her young Sisters:—

"I accompanied Reverend Mother on a visit to a poor sick woman who had four young children; we found the poor creature lying on the floor, unable to help herself in any way. The room she occupied was almost destitute of furniture, but there was a rickety old bed and mattress. Reverend Mother asked the sick woman why she did not occupy the bed? Was it not better than the bare floor? She answered that her husband, a drunken, worthless fellow, had dragged her from it the previous night. The dear Mother went into the little adjoining room which served for kitchen, living room and all, got a little water and washed the poor woman's face; then called in a child from the street and told her to borrow a nightgown from the next neighbor, which the said neighbor kindly gave (often we meet charity among the poor which is frequently wanting among the better class). Reverend Mother changed the creature's clothes, tied up the old bed with the help of her companion, placed the mattress on it and helped the sick woman into it. The poor woman blessed her and God who sent her to minister to her wants. This blessing of the poor the good Mother valued highly, and she herself frequently made use of the prayer when anything was done for her, 'May God bless you.'

"Reverend Mother then went into the kitchen and

out into the yard and collected sticks and paper, cleaned the little stove, made the fire and put on the kettle to boil, while at the same time she directed me to tidy the apartment. The good Mother made a cup of tea, she herself had brought all the necessaries. She took it to the sick creature who had had nothing of the kind for days. (The dear Mother, who was always only too ready to excuse faults in all, said that it was the want of little comforts when ailing, tired, overworked, etc., that caused many of the poor to have recourse to intoxicating drinks.)

"While Reverend Mother was giving the poor woman the drink, I was cleaning the kitchen and found scraps of onions, small pieces of potatoes, etc., on a soiled plate and in order to wash this I threw the scraps away. Reverend Mother went into the yard again to hunt up more wood, etc., and found what I had thrown out. She picked it up, found also a few small pieces of meat, placed all in a saucepan on the fire, and in a few minutes she had a nice little stew ready for the four children's supper, with the addition of some bread and tea."

I shall let another Sister describe some other sick-calls made in company with Mother Baptist; and I expect to be more than forgiven for not suppressing some very simple details:

"I well remember my first visitation with her. We went to one of the small alleys, up a rickety stairs. The patient was in bed (a querulous old maid). Reverend Mother spoke to her in a soothing tone for a few minutes, and asked her how she was since her recent visit. Then Mother pinned up her cloak, and she had a pair of sheets pinned around her, one in front and

the other across and fastened behind, and a pillow-case pinned on each arm. The poor creature's bed was in a bad condition. Reverend Mother made it up fresh, while she directed me to tidy the room. Her prayers for the sick were soothing and consoling. Indeed, she fulfilled the precept of the Apostle; she became all to all to gain them to Christ. On another occasion she went to visit a Protestant, whose wife and children were good Catholics. This man had been very ill for some time. It happened to be the Feast of the Holy Name. Mother spoke to him of the goodness of God, of Heaven, etc. Mr. W. answered rather sharply, 'he was quite satisfied as he was, that he never prevented his wife and children from following their religion,' etc. Mother said: 'Well, Mr. W., you will have no objection if we say a prayer for you?' 'Oh, no,' he answered. She knelt and recited the Litany of Jesus, oh! with what unction! Shortly after Mr. W. asked to be admitted into the Church, and died a most edifying death after a long and trying illness.

"On another occasion Mother was looking for a house on one of the small streets, where a poor man was sick. Some children saw her looking for the number and said 'The sick man lives there, Sister!' She entered, and a nice woman met her in the hall and said, 'I think you must be making a mistake.' Mother said the children told us he lived here. The woman answered: 'It is true there is a very sick man here, but I am afraid that he would not see you; he is a bigoted Protestant. I am a Catholic, Sister, but I have very little education, and I do not know how to argue; I simply pray for him.' Mother went in,

and she saw by the man that he was black (not in color, but in heart), and very ill. She spoke a few words; the tone of her voice was as a note of a well-tuned instrument; she said nothing of religion, she mentioned God and His goodness. This man was in comfortable circumstances and a Freemason. When leaving, Mother said, 'We have a call in this neighborhood; would you like us to come in again?' He said yes, but it meant, 'I do not care.' Several times again Mother called, and had the pleasure of seeing him die a holy death. He suffered intensely, and could not suffer enough to atone for the past; he renounced Masonry and offered his life's sufferings and death to God.

"Another of her calls was an old woman, a convert, eighty-five years old, who was suffering for years from internal cancer. She was refined, but very poor. She could have every comfort if she renounced her religion. Her daughter, a woman about forty years old, took care of her. They had two rooms, kept scrupulously clean. Mother was a frequent visitor there. The smell from the disease was very offensive. Nothing consoled Mrs. J. so much as a visit from Mother and one of her lovely prayers; she used to say so impressively for her the offering of suffering, 'O my God, I offer to you all I have suffered, all I am now suffering, and all I have yet to suffer in atonement for my sins,' etc. When any of the other Sisters called on Mrs. J. she would say, 'Mother Russell's daughters are welcome, very welcome; but no one's visit is like hers.' Many a time she would slip off her under-skirt and give it to some poor needy creature, take out her handkerchief and wipe the sweat off their brow. Her

charity was Godlike and her patience was like to that of the Spouse whom she served so long and faithfully. She listened and appeared so interested in the tales and sorrows of the poor; she loved them in and for God; she denied herself in order to help and give to them. She frequently told me that, no matter what she gave, God sent her its equivalent or gave it on the double. No matter how disagreeable the subject was, or tale confided to her, she never showed disgust or appeared wearied. I never saw her impatient or angry, and no matter how often one would go to her she never showed any displeasure; one was always welcome to her time and advice. I remember being on eight visitations with her on one Good Friday in the early '80's; she was fasting, of course; all very poor people, except one. This exception was a very wealthy gentleman, who was very ill, and his most devoted wife was his nurse. Mother's manner to the seven poor cases was as respectful and attentive as to the rich; she really loved the poor of Christ."

The following example of her thoughtful charity seems to deserve the preference before countless others that must be passed over:

"She was a very poor beggar for herself and her works, but quite eloquent when writing for others. I remember the case of a woman who was in good circumstances in the early days of San Francisco. This person had a daughter who was to be married, and the mother had not means to procure the outfit; she came as usual to our dear Mother, and that good Mother wrote a touching letter to a very wealthy lady, whose only daughter was about to be married, saying what a blessing the mother's charity would bring on the

future bride, if she (Mrs. W.) helped to make a fellow-creature happy, and how probably she knew the mother of the one for whom she was begging, when she was in very different circumstances, &c.

"I made the remark to her, 'Would she stop at nothing? Was it in marriage she was now taking part?' When the good lady responded generously with quite an elegant outfit, even three pairs of lovely kid gloves, the good, dear mother took the greatest pleasure in displaying them to all the Sisters and asking their prayers for the kind, generous donor, and for her daughter, who was soon to be a bride. The bridegroom was not a Catholic, but she had the happiness of seeing him a good practical one in a short time. I am sorry to say that he was not spared for this world, but trust that he now enjoys the happiness of Heaven. R. I. P."

Mother Austin Carroll, of Mobile, thinks that her friend's greatest quality was perhaps her inexhaustible charity and compassion for those who needed help and sympathy. Another illustration of this tenderness of heart may be found in an extract from one of Mother Baptist's letters:

"The Hospital keeps pretty well filled, notwithstanding the open opposition from many quarters. A young woman died here some time ago of consumption; death was at hand when she came, but the good priest who sent her said it was a charity to take her, though nothing could be done, if it were only to give her a few hours' quiet before death. The poor soul had close quarters, and her two children were pulling and pulling her all day long, and their noisy plays were distressing to her. She lived only a couple of days. When the poor, desolate

husband brought the little ones to the funeral, she looked so nice in her coffin, the children did not seem to know she was dead; the eldest, about five years old, said to her father: 'Mamma's not coughing now. She's not sick now;' and she kept going from the coffin to the father, evidently puzzled; but when the last prayers were said, and the undertakers put the lid on, she burst into tears and threw herself into her father's arms, 'Why did you let my mamma die. O papa, why did you do it?' The poor man could do nothing but cry; and indeed many present were also moved to tears. It was as touching a scene as I would care to witness, and we see many such. What a sad thing was the wreck of the 'Drummond Castle!' No wonder the bed of the ocean is called the largest cemetery in the world."

As another revelation of this tender heart, I will give a letter written in one of her last years to a young girl who was confined to bed by a disease of the spine:

My Dearest Gussie:

I think you must have made the prayer of St. Augustine your own—"Here burn, here cut, here do not spare, but spare me for eternity." Your mother tells me your sufferings are greater than ever. God's will be done. He promises to fit the back to the burden, and I am sure He will not fail to increase His grace and strength in your soul as He increases your pains, and then, dear Gussie, a moment of pain will be followed by an eternity of joy.

Your dear mother, father and sister suffer at the sight of your sufferings, but do not let that grieve you. God will sustain them, and even reward them for all they suffer, and by being conformed to His will you will draw down many blessings on them. I do not fail to place you

daily in the tender care of the Mother of Sorrows, but you know it was not God's will that she should have the consolation of assuaging the pains of her Divine Son, and it may be that she sees it is more for God's glory, and your real good that you suffer more, and knowing you desire only God's will, she does not relieve you. But never fear, she will support and strengthen you; so, dear Gussie, do not lose courage. What you have gone through is past forever, but the merit of it is before you.

I missed your letters, and I am glad Mother has broken the ice. I know she will write again, hurried though she be. To-morrow will be the feast of St. Joseph. I give you special prayers on that day and during his octave. I don't ask you to pray for me, just one aspiration. May God continue to bless you, my dearest Gussie.

Ever yours affectionately in J. C.,

Sr. M. B. Russell.

To a younger sister of this good girl, Mother Baptist wrote as follows:

San Francisco, April 24, 1896.

My Dear Little Namesake:

I was very much pleased to get your little note, but it had one great defect—you never mentioned Gussie. How came such an omission? Now you have to write soon again, and tell me all about her, for I am always anxious to hear of her. Had you signed your letter Jean Redman, I would know very well who you are, but don't you think as you are a little girl, you would better make it feminine and write Jeanne Baptiste? That is the way little Jeanne Fottrell writes her name. Both her grandmas are Jane, and to distinguish her she is called Jeanne.

It will be very useful to learn German, so I hope you will avail yourself of the opportunity you now enjoy with the German Sisters, and learn to speak it. I suppose

Eva knows last Sunday was the feast of St. Expedit, to whom she introduced us. We had never heard of him until she sent his litany. Tell her we all said a Novena in his honor, and think he did hurry up some matters for us, but much is needed, so let her continue to remind him of our needs. He did something good for a poor little orhpan who invoked his aid, and the child sent me word that she will be "Sister Expedit" when she is grown.

Your good Bishop Montgomery called to see Father McManus when he was sick in our hospital, and then came to see me. I was delighted to see him looking so well. I said the climate of Los Angeles must agree with him, and he replied, "Yes, indeed it does."

Now, dear Jeanne, I must bring this to a close, and wish you good-bye. Remember me in your prayers, and give my love to mother and all the family, but in a special manner to dear Gussie. I send a prayer to St. Joseph to keep in your prayer-book to remind you to pray for me at Mass.

Ever, dear Jeanne, your affectionate

SR. M. B. RUSSELL,
Sister of Mercy.

Three years earlier she wrote to Gussie in a true Christmas spirit ten days before the feast.

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 14, 1893.

MY DEAR GUSSIE:

Knowing you have to act "Santa Claus" for the little people, I send you this box of different things to help to sustain the Saint's good name.

I trust, dear Gussie, you are a little easier, a little improved; still, whatever God allows is for your good, so continue to say often, "God's holy will be done." One such act of conformity in time of trial is, according to

St. Augustine, more meritorious than thousands of acts of love when all goes smoothly.

I hope your dear mamma is well. Give her my love and best wishes, and your papa, too, the same. Ask them to pray for me sometimes. I need not say a few lines, when you feel able to write, will give me pleasure. Wish all a happy, holy Christmas for me. Have you still a sister with the Sisters of the Holy Names? I hope Louis and Lander continue a comfort to their parents, and Joseph also.

Ever, dear Gussie, yours affectionately in J. C.,

Sr. M. B. Russell,
Sister of Mercy.

CHAPTER XI.

INFLUENCE OF HER CHARACTER.

THE following is a sample of hundreds of similar instances of Mother Baptist's wide-spreading influence that are known and of thousands that are unknown :

"A missionary priest, one very much interested in conversions, met while visiting San Francisco recently, a lady, whom he found to be a convert of many years. Having asked the cause which led her into the true fold, she replied, 'Several years ago while crossing the bay in one of the ferry-boats, my attention was attracted by a crowd, talking quite excitedly. My curiosity being aroused, I made some inquiries. The object of the scene was a small friendless girl who was travelling alone. She had no home in the city nor friends to whom she could go. A suggestion was made that she be taken to St. Mary's Hospital. The Superior of that Institution was known to be a kind lady, who would doubtless have pity on the poor waif. Feeling deeply moved with compassion for the homeless child, I offered to conduct her thereto. Never shall I forget the welcome that awaited us—the homeless one was received with open arms by Mother Baptist Russell. Immediately preparations

were made to make her comfortable. No mother could have done more nor show more tender pity than this good Superior did for the poor forsaken child. This, I said to myself, is true Christian charity. It was then the seed of my conversion was sown, but it took many years and the cross to fructify it. At that time I had wealth at my disposal. Time and circumstances brought a change into my life. It was a trial bitter and hard to bear, particularly so for one without religion. In my desolation I sought comfort from my friends, but alas! in vain. It was then that the foregoing incident recurred to my mind. Serious thoughts took possession of me. I asked for instruction and was in a very short time received into the Fold, of which Mother Baptist had been to me the beacon light.' "

There was no dearth of objects for Mother Baptist's charity even in that rich young land. Writing in March, 1894, she says:

"I think I mentioned the crowds of unemployed men in this city for the last five months; 589 at our door for breakfast yesterday. We had to employ a second baker. Some good people send flour, coffee and sugar. It is going on since October. About Christmas the number was over six hundred for a few days "

And on the last day of that month, writing to her Sisters in Kinsale about the Golden Jubilee at their convent, she refers again to this less cheerful subject:

"You heard already of the hundreds who come to us daily for food. I regret to say the number is not lessened, but, thank God, we continue to get the wherewithal to give them every morning a pint of

coffee and dry bread. Thirty barrels of flour, 300 lbs. of sugar and 100 lbs. of coffee came to-day from the good man, James Carroll, who sent a similar supply two or three times already. Mrs. Peter Donahue sent fifty dollars, and young Peter Donahue a hundred dollars for the same purpose. Others helped, but these are the largest benefactors. The number of men this morning was 658."

One of her spiritual daughters, whose recollections go back to the year 1871, when the school of "Our Lady of Mercy" was opened, speaks of the manner in which Mother Baptist fascinated her young pupils in the class of religious instruction which she reserved to herself. "As a school girl I revered her as a saint, and never changed my opinion. I never knew any one who so closely portrayed the life of our divine Lord. We loved her to give us our religious instructions, and this duty for many years she reserved to herself, although she had innumerable other calls on her time. The Bible stories she told in such a fascinating way and so earnestly that we were deeply impressed, and the Scriptural quotations were so often repeated, in appropriate places, in the course of her instructions that we learned them without any labor; in fact, it was the lesson we most loved. Many of the early pupils of the above mentioned school became religious—some have already won their crown, some are still working for it; but I feel all would unite with me in attesting that they owe their vocation, under God, to the beautiful 'Gospel lessons' she impressed on our young minds. We all loved her, she was so gentle, kind and interested in our sodalities, entertainments, etc., and gave us such encouragement."

This witness ends with an opinion which is supported by many of the extracts that we have given. "Her most remarkable virtue, I think, was charity; and this she tried to impress deeply on our young minds. Her charity was unbounded. She loved the poor, and could not even read of their wrongs without shedding tears, she had such a tender heart for all in affliction."

One of the notes taken by Mother Baptist in one of her Retreats touches on this subject and some kindred topics:

"A true Sister of Mercy, a true child of our beloved Foundress, must have a very special love for the poor, as that is the spirit of our rules. Let us not forget His tenderness to sinners in our own necessary intercourse with the inmates of the Asylum, etc., etc., and in the schools, above all, let us win the young hearts to God by our gentle kindness and interest to all, carefully avoiding favorites. We can scarcely understand the serious and evil consequences of unkindness to children, especially when accompanied, as it generally is, by a display of temper. It embitters the young mind, and does not convince it of the wrong it has done; but rightly enough the child considers the religious is in fault. Often it drives the child to the public school, or, if not allowed by its parents to go there, it lessens the influence of the Sisters in general; and, when the child is an old woman, the sting too often remains. When she becomes a mother herself, can we expect her to impress her children's minds with esteem for religious or to make any effort to send her little ones to them for instruction? What a string of evils one person's want of the right spirit may entail!

Above all, religious are under a certain obligation of praying for those under their care, which is but too little considered, I fear, by many. In this country and this century, when 'Liberty' is the cry in every mouth, the training of youth is a laborious charge; but when we see them so soon throw off the yoke of their parents, though the laws of God and man and even nature itself teach submission to them, we need not wonder that they rebel against *us*. Can I ever be sufficiently grateful for the blessings I enjoyed in childhood? Never, never. May God be praised!"

As this is one of the very few spiritual notes of Mother Baptist's that have come into our hands, we may join with it some of the others. Thus in the Triduum which closed the year 1886 she prayed this prayer:

"My God, I thank You for pardoning me so often. Give me grace to be faithful to You, inviolably faithful to You, hereafter. I do not ask for fervor nor delight in Your service, but only the grace of fidelity to You in all things; this is all I ask, all I desire."

Here are three other very practical notes:

"We know this to be true, humility is not a solitary virtue, but includes many. For are not the really humble also meek, gentle, laborious, patient, docile, obedient, cheerful? In short, do they not possess every virtue? And why not? Does not the Scripture assure us 'God giveth His grace to the humble?'

"Our nature inclines us to ease and comfort, and we must be on our guard lest under pretext of necessity we indulge it by unnecessary sleep, rest, etc. But, as it is an obligation to preserve our health, it is best to

be guided on this point as on all others by obedience, always mistrusting ourselves when we side with natural inclinations.

"Our rules are the expression of the Divine Will in our regard; can we then deceive ourselves by thinking we are fulfilling this obligation while we are negligent in the observance of the duties prescribed by our rules? Among our duties those regarding the immediate service of God are too often the very ones we are inclined to curtail or perhaps even neglect altogether. Considered in one sense, all the duties prescribed are of equal importance and our holy Foundress puts meals, recreation, etc., on a par with Mass, lecture, etc.; but as our own sanctification is our primary object, and as without God's help (which is chiefly obtained by prayer) we can do nothing meritorious, we must therefore see that our spirituals are to hold the first place, and Superiors will be accountable to God if they do not afford their subjects time to discharge the devotions that are of obligation. But it is, generally speaking, our tepidity and not real want of time prevents us giving the prescribed time to meditation, etc. If we yield to the suggestion of nature and the enemy of our perfection and remain in bed for every slight cause, we are necessarily hurried to get through with our duties and the personal one, 'Meditation,' is the one to suffer. Then again our infidelity (though we may excuse it) is sure to deprive us of the fervor and unction we might otherwise experience and so the duty is irksome and we leave it sooner than absolutely obliged."

Internal evidence shows that it was before Sacramento ceased to belong to the Archdiocese of San

Francisco that Mother Baptist wrote this undated letter to her "dearest Sister Mary Regis," who no doubt died several years before herself:

"Your letter this morning made me shed tears of holy joy. The sentiments you express of entire and loving abandonment into the hands of God's providence are just what I most wish for you and for all of us. If it were God's will, we would no doubt be glad to have you stronger, so that you might continue longer to labor for His glory; but if He is pleased to call you from us, I trust it is that your appointed task is finished and the reward at hand. For we cannot doubt but that he who rewards the giving of a cup of water, which costs neither labor nor money, will amply reward the exertions you have made, in spite of weak lungs and a hot climate, to instruct his little ones in the right way. If we were more numerous, and if this climate was not evidently more trying on you than that of Sacramento, we would probably take you down; but, as it is, manage yourself as best you can, taking and asking for anything in the way of nourishment and rest that will help you to keep up, and arranging your duties with the same object. If you can change a duty with a Sister occasionally, ask her freely: for instance, though you had better for a time keep the management of the Children of Mary, spare your voice and don't instruct, but select a book for one of them to read while you are there, or get Sister Mary de Sales to give the instruction."

This letter is unfinished on the one leaf that has reached me. The page ends with no signature, and on the back of it the following verses are written in imitation of type:

Father, the cross Thou layest on me
I Thy child most humbly kiss,
Nor would I, though choice were given,
Ask for any one but this.

Give me only grace to bear it
Calmly, humbly, cheerfully;
Then whatever Thou may'st send me
Will be welcome unto me.

Blind, unworthy, faithless atom,
How can I presume to choose?
Or Thy gift, All-wise Creator,
Venture madly to refuse?

I, who, if Thy grace direct not,
Know not what to ask or shun—
Oh! my tender, loving Father,
Not my will, but Thine be done.

"Thy will be done" was the motto on Mother Baptist's profession-ring; and one of her favorite ejaculations was always, "May the most just, the most high, and the most amiable will of God be in all things done, praised and exalted above all forever!" Another was, "We praise and adore Thee, O divine Providence. We resign ourselves to Thy holy will."

One of her sisters in religion says that Mother Baptist could not speak of the Passion of Our Divine Lord without being moved to tears; and she thinks that she shed tears every time that she prepared for confession. It is needless to say that all through her life she was in a very special manner devoted to the Blessed Sacrament. Every new house she founded was a new home for our Sacramental Lord, where He was sure to be

faithfully served and fervently adored. The Sister whom we have quoted several times says in a letter, "I have just been reading your little book, '*Close to the Altar Rails*,' and a passage about 'Jesus of Nazareth passing by' brings the dear Mother very near to me. For several years, perhaps twelve, it has been my very happy privilege to accompany the priest with bell and candle when he takes Holy Communion to any of the Sisters or patients in the hospital. I always told Reverend mother beforehand on these occasions that Jesus of Nazareth would soon pass by. I can see her even now raise her calm, lovely eyes heavenward, and a moisture of love would gather in them; and then she would pray a silent prayer, and then a smile and fervent 'God bless you,' would send me rejoicing on my duty of love."

An old pupil of Mother Baptist spoke lately of her religious instructions, especially about Holy Communion, and her manner of reading the sixth chapter of St. John, which this lady still reads on the eve of Holy Communion, while she recalls her beloved Mother's instructions and the very tones of her voice. We may pass on from this subject, after inserting one of Mother Baptist's notes of a certain Annual Retreat:

"No wonder the good Father expressed his appreciation of the beautiful instruction of our holy Foundress, on the Blessed Sacrament, contained in our Holy Rule. But he was especially struck with the wisdom of her words, 'In all their difficulties, troubles and temptations, the Sisters shall seek comfort and consolation at the foot of the altar.' Not (as nature too often would incline and Satan always prompts us to do) from our Sisters, to whom we can-

not confide our troubles, difficulties or temptations without almost certain injury to them as well as to ourselves. If we are wise, we will seldom, and better still, *never* open our minds on the trials we meet except to our Superior and Confessor, and not even to them until we have with filial confidence talked it all over to our sweet, loving Lord who awaits us day and night in the Tabernacle and says as He did in the Scripture: 'Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy burthened and I will refresh you.' "

In putting these notes together, I have, perhaps, dwelt too exclusively on Mother Baptist's personal qualities to the neglect of her work. Those especially who live on the spot, and know the details of the subject far better than any one at a distance can know them, will claim that I have not chronicled the beginnings and the developments of the various institutions which her prudence allowed her zeal to undertake. The history of St. Mary's Hospital would, by itself, form an interesting volume. Before, however, attempting a brief account of these charitable enterprises, space may be found for a few more of those personal tributes that have come under my notice.

As far back as the early sixties, a good man, long since dead, Mr. Michael Robert Ryan, of Temple Mungret, Limerick, repeated to me the opinion of a sea-captain who had brought his vessel up the Shannon and had come to Mr. Ryan, either as Mayor of Limerick at the time or consul for some foreign country. During his previous voyage this gentleman had called at San Francisco, where he saw and heard enough to make him speak to a stranger of Mother Russell as already "a power in the States." But

much more valuable is the testimony of one who had better means of judging than this sturdy captain can have had. Father Peter O'Flinn, S. J., now working at Melbourne in Australia, was for some time a member of the Jesuit community at San Francisco. He writes thus after her death:

"I wish that a true 'Life' of her could be written and published, for, if it were composed with a full knowledge of her and her works, I think it would be useful and edifying to all of us. Mother Baptist appeared to me to possess the qualities of head and heart, natural and supernatural, to fit her in an eminent degree for the office of Superioress. So well and so satisfactorily and so successfully did she perform her part that she was selected for that post six times, or rather, I should say, as often as the rules permitted. Many were the virtues, amiable and admirable, that adorned her character and conduct. But one in particular, or rather a combination of them all, made her administration unique and preëminent. In the large community of nuns and in the various establishments connected with the convent—the hospital, the industrial school, the home for destitute girls, and the Magdalen Asylum, all under her charge—everything was carried out with such perfect order and suavity that there was no clatter, no rushing, no confusion, no collision. Everything was done with the precision and smoothness of clockwork. So much so that an eminent politician said one day, 'She could govern the United States better than most of our men.'"

Another priest, who knew Mother Baptist in a mere passing way, visited San Francisco in quest of funds

for the completion of the new church at Omagh. The Mother Superior of St. Mary's Hospital might well have pleaded her own pressing wants as an excuse for not contributing to so remote an object; but it seems she did not. "Mother Russell impressed me," writes Father McGlade, "with her business-like air and quiet power, and her conversation and demeanor served still more to strengthen that impression. Her kind sympathy and charitable disposition, as evidenced in my own regard by a substantial subscription to the object of my mission, showed also that underneath the solid, firm exterior which made her a fit ruler for the largest hospital in San Francisco, there lay hidden those interior virtues which befit the model religious. It was these qualities that made her name a household word all over San Francisco and secured for her many remarkable manifestations of confidence and esteem."

A still more competent witness is a member of Mother Baptist's Community, who attaches no signature to her very simple deposition.

"I knew Rev. Mother Russell for years. During that time I could not fail to notice that she was a perfect religious, schooled in the practice of every virtue, but remarkable above all for unbounded confidence in Divine Providence, forgetfulness of self, and consideration for others. When I was in Sacramento, being but a postulant and unaccustomed to the climate, I felt the heat very much and was not slow in expressing my feelings in regard to it. Rev. Mother took in the situation at once, but instead of correcting me there and then for my want of mortification, as another would have done, she said nothing, but presently adopted means to make me feel cool and comfort-

able. When the Sisters went into retreat—it was my first —the kind Mother feared the eight days' silence would be too much for me, so she said: 'My dear, whenever you see me disengaged, come and speak to me.' Glad of the chance, I obeyed literally, and though I went so often, she never manifested the slightest shade of annoyance and always received me most graciously and did all in her power to cheer me and make me happy. One conversation I had with Mother some time previous to her death impressed me very much and serves to show her beautiful spirit of forbearance. I cannot remember her exact words, but the substance was as follows: Speaking of zeal, she said, that, if we remembered how patiently God waits for the repentance of sinners, we would be more patient with those who do wrong. We cannot force people to do right. God does not do so. How easily He could stop all the evil-doing in the world! But he chooses rather to suffer it and wait long for the good proceeding from man's free will."

Mother Austin Carroll, now of Mobile and Selma, whose "Leaves from the Annals of the Sisters of Mercy," we have quoted more than once, says in a private letter: "The greatest quality Mother Baptist possessed was, I think, an inexhaustible charity and compassion for those who needed help and sympathy, for orphans, for all." And in another letter: "I never enjoyed any period of my life more than the time I spent with her at San Francisco; and she used to say that she thoroughly enjoyed the time she spent with me in New Orleans. The Sisters were delighted with her, she was so gay, so full of anecdotes, and such a delightful addition to our little company at recreation.

She petted the orphans whenever she met them, and preferred to stay at the Orphan Asylum. As a story-teller, she was unique. It seems to me that I regret her more and more every day." This last allusion to Mother Baptist's skill as *raconteuse* suggests the remark that here again she took after the parent to whom she was often compared. Her mother resembled the lady whom Mr. Thomas Arnold describes in his recently published "Passages in a Wandering Life." She was noted for her powers of conversation, which was that of the old school—more dignified, correct, and deliberate than has for many years been the fashion." In her stories and anectodes, Mrs. Russell would sometimes *encounter* a person and *accost* him where her young listeners would be inclined merely to meet and speak to him. In this feature of her story-telling and conversation Mother Baptist seems to have hit on a mean between the styles of the two generations—less Johnsonese than the elder, less slipshood than the younger.

Mother Austin Carroll did not wait for Mother Baptist's death to praise her. As far back as "Shrove Tuesday, 1882," writing from New Orleans to Mother Emmanuel Russell of Newry, she speaks of both her sisters, the dead and the one then living still:

"You may well be congratulated on having Mother Baptist Russell for your sister. It would not surprise me to hear that she wrought miracles, and, if you knew me, you would learn that, though I take rather mild views of people in general, I am hard to be pleased in my saints. And, as I am under obligations to that dear holy soul, let me tell you, if ever I can oblige you, command me, for it would give me great

gratification to serve any one whom she loves. This is a great deal more than I would venture to say to herself. I said a good deal on the same subject a few days ago to Father Theobald Butler, S. J., who is Provincial of the Jesuits in the South. We were speaking of *The Irish Monthly*, of which I take six copies, one for each of our branches, and he spoke of Father Matthew Russell with great interest and affection. 'If he is only a little like his transported sister,' said I, 'I can readily believe all the good things you say of him.' I had the pleasure of meeting your Sister Mary Aquin (R.I.P.) at St. Mary's of the Isle, Cork, in 1854, I think. I had just received the white veil—she too was a novice—she was next to me in the refectory and I had charge of her, so we had time to become great friends. I had a sincere esteem for her. We had a General Communion for her here when the news of her death came. So, my dear Mother, you will be good enough not to regard me as quite a stranger.''

The following extract from one of Mother Baptist's own letters throws some light on her character. It was addressed to one of her branch communities on the 16th of February, 1890:

"You must all pray that God will bless us, and all try to be extra good, exact and pious this Lent. Of course fasting from food is not included in the good things, but cheerfulness at duties, exactness, charity, silence, attention and fervor at prayer, etc. At our last meeting I said a good deal on the evil of repeating remarks we may have heard to the person of whom they were made. It is no palliation of the fault, or at least very little, to say, 'We did not divulge the name.'

If the one of whom the remarks were made, and to whom they are repeated second hand, has the heavenly wisdom to take no notice further than to humble herself and resolve on amendment, if culpable, it would do her good instead of harm, and the chatterer would be the only one injured ; but unfortunately some persons do not alone feel hurt, but express their displeasure, never cease till they find out who made the remark, or perhaps settle on one that is innocent, and will then rake up the faults of this person, as if that would lessen their own guilt, and their poor minds become embittered and disturbed all from the unguarded tongue and their own pride. Now I do not know that this applies to any of you, but it is no harm to be forewarned ; so think it over, and you will be less likely to fall into this serious fault. I also spoke of the evil of curiosity and inquisitiveness. Let us think of St. Paul's words, ' I know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.' Well, my dear Sisters, God bless you all."

The preceding year Mother Baptist wrote a Christmas letter to one of her branch houses, in which among other wise and cheery things she says :

"I know you will each do all in your power to contribute to the general happiness during this joyous season, and that you will make good use of the quiet three days to lay in spiritual strength for the coming year, and repair the rents caused by your struggles during the time that is past. You can renew your vows in concert as we will do here, that is, you (Sr. M. Nolasco) say the words aloud, and the others join you. I hope you are keeping a good fire, and that those who have cold feet, which I dare say all have,

get a jar of hot water in their bed at night. We are not so mortified as to wish to be kept awake all night with cold feet. Our mortification must be bearing with all that is disagreeable in each other, laboring hard with stupid, wilful children, accepting humbly the thanklessness of their dissatisfied parents, and the many other disagreeable things we meet with in our daily life. All this is true mortification, and very pleasing to God, besides showing more of a really mortified spirit than any corporal penance we could undertake."

She ends her motherly encyclical thus:

"Now, my dear Sisters, one and all, may God bless you, and may you be every one more pleasing to our sweet Infant Saviour than you ever were, and you know that means may you be meek, loving, humble, laborious, forbearing, etc. Let us pray fervently for each other. I hope that you have a little Crib, and that you will be happy in God."

The description that one of the poets of her adopted country, Colonel John Hay, gives of a certain Sister St. Luke, needs to be modified in order to suit Mother Baptist:

"She lived shut in by flowers and trees
And shade of gentle bigotries.
On this side lay the trackless sea,
On that the great world's mystery;
But all unseen and all unguessed
They could not break upon her rest.
The world's far splendors gleamed and flashed,
Afar the wild seas foamed and dashed;
But in her small, dull Paradise,
Safe housed from rapture or surprise,

Nor day nor night had power to fright
The peace of God that filled her eyes."

Her convent home lay between the trackless sea and one of the capitals of the great world. She made it her earthly Paradise, but it was not particularly small and certainly not dull. The poet comes nearest to her at the last; for neither night nor day nor any event, agreeable or untoward, could disturb "the peace of God that filled her eyes." More appropriate to our Irish American nun is the fine sonnet of our Irish Catholic poet, Aubrey de Vere:

"A trancéd beauty dwells upon her face,
A lustrous summer-calm of peace and prayer;
In those still eyes the keenest gaze can trace
No sad disturbance, and no trace of care.
Peace rests upon her lips, and forehead fair,
And temples unadorned; a cloistered grace
Says to the gazer over-bold, 'Beware,'
Yet love hath made her breast his dwelling-place.
An awful might abideth with the pure,
And theirs the only wisdom from above,
She seems to listen to some strain obscure
Of music in sidereal regions wove,
Or to await some more transcendent dower
From heaven descending on her like a dove."

It is written of St. John Berchmans that his laugh was rather seen than heard; and almost to the same effect one of the notes about Mother Baptist tells us that "she rarely laughed outright. She would smile. She had an inimitable smile by which she could express ever so much fun or pleasure as the case might be."

Quietly and solidly happy herself, she was constantly striving to promote the real happiness of others. Her thoughtful kindness for every one in any sort of trouble was untiring and inexhaustible. She did not shrink from relieving the necessities that appealed to her in the way that most persons find most irksome—namely, by procuring from others the means of doing so. She had no scruple "in asking good Mr. Carroll for sufficient cash to pay a certain person's way on the cars (his railway fare) to Los Angeles and to get him a few underclothes." And when good Mr. Carroll (God bless him) sends fifty dollars for the purpose, she writes from the asylum to some Sister, that "twenty dollars is sufficient for the trip, five or six in his pocket, and with the rest get him what you see he needs most to make a decent appearance when presenting himself."

CHAPTER XII.

FOUNDATIONS AND CHARITABLE WORKS.

We cannot, however, glance through these letters any longer, but must keep our promise of giving some account of the institutions that Mother Baptist founded and the charitable works that she carried on.

Praise be to God for all the good, known and unknown, that has been wrought for the glory of God and the salvation of many of His human creatures through the gentle and modest ministry of the Sisters of Mercy in California since New Year's Day, 1855, when the newly-arrived Sisters visited for the first time the County Hospital of San Francisco. How many fervent Communions, how many devout Visits, how many holy Masses, since January 3, 1855, when an altar was erected and the Blessed Sacrament was brought for the first time to the small house in Vallejo street, which was their first home, before they removed on the 3d of March following to a larger house in Stockton street!

In an early portion of this sketch a slight account was given of the first beginnings of St. Mary's Hospital, of which the foundation stone was laid by Archbishop Alemany on the 2d of September, 1860, when,

as the stone itself recorded, Pius IX was Pope, James Buchanan was President of the United States, and John G. Downey, an Irishman and a Catholic, was Governor of the State of California. * In the stone, along with many interesting documents and holy objects, was deposited "some clay from old Ireland."

Even when St. Mary's Hospital rose to its full height from this foundation, it was far short of the completeness which it had attained on the 8th of September, 1891, when Mother Baptist described it to her aunt, a Sister of Mercy in Dundalk, who is still living when the letter is transcribed, but may have passed to her reward before it is printed.

"Every one says the Hospital is very perfect. There is every convenience that could be imagined: electric bells and lights, speaking tubes, a passenger elevator, chutes for soiled clothes, letters, dust, etc., etc. The three principal corridors are 200 feet long with large triple windows at each end; there are thirty-five private rooms, about a dozen of which are double, and there are eighteen wards, but none large —the largest only accommodating twelve. The bath-rooms, water-closets, and lavatories are all nicely tiled, both floors and walls, to the height of six feet; and the basins, slabs, etc., are marble. The house is heated throughout by steam. But the grandest part of all is the mansard story, in which the operating rooms are situated. There are two antiseptic

* The first Governor of this State, Mr. Peter H. Burnett, became a Catholic also and wrote "A Lawyer's Way into the Catholic Church."



ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL, SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.



THE CHAPEL IN ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL.

rooms, the ceiling, walls and floors are tiled, the basins and slabs marble, and they are so constructed that the whole can be hosed out, and the water flows to one corner and runs off down a marble gutter. The operating tables are heavy plate glass in nickel-plated frames. The ophthalmic and electric rooms are furnished in hard wood with oilcloth on floor. There is a large waiting-room off which these rooms all open. We have got the attic hard finished, and one end is for the female employés, the other for the male. The operating rooms are placed between them and only reached by the elevator. There are three flights of stairs, one in our end of the building. We have better and more ample accommodation than formerly, the chief things being fine offices for the Superior and Bursar, which we needed much. All this, of course, has increased our debt, but I have no doubt with the blessing of God we shall pay it off in due time. We have an elegant suite of offices—a dining-room, drug-store, and a private parlor for the doctors on the first floor; also parlors and a very neat mortuary chapel from which the funerals take place without being obliged as formerly to go from the hall door. Altogether, our place is now very complete."

How many happy deaths has St. Mary's Hospital secured for poor creatures that turned to God sincerely at the last! Mother Baptist's letters for forty years are full of consoling instances. Space cannot be afforded for any of them, but we may refer to one who was not a patient but a physician at St. Mary's. If Dr. Robinson had not attended at St. Mary's professionally, he would hardly have died a Catholic death

under the striking circumstances described in one of Mother Baptist's letters.

"He was a good man, and God rewarded him with the true Faith. Many times we feared he might be carried off suddenly without having taken the final step, and Mrs. R. suffered great anxiety on this account, for she understood the precarious state of his health; but, as I dare say you have heard, he had the grace to call for the priest when he found himself sinking on the train, although surrounded by Protestants. And indeed, no Catholics could have behaved better than they did. They got the car, in which the doctor was, detached from the train, and they brought the priest from the town at which they stopped. After the priest had paid him a long visit in private, the gentlemen were summoned and knelt (not a usual thing for non-Catholics) while the last Sacraments were being administered, one of them removing the doctor's socks. When the priest had taken his departure, the poor doctor said to those present, 'Now, thank God, I have received the Sacraments of the Catholic Church, and if you can only bring me home to die, it is all I ask.' The poor man expired when only half-way on his journey. It was a terrible shock to his wife, but all the bitterness was gone when she thought of the wonderful grace accorded to him."

In another letter, after telling about a young man who had applied for admission into the French hospital and then into the German hospital and had been refused because manifestly in a dying state, but who was admitted into St. Mary's and quickly prepared for his first Confession and Communion, as Baptism was the only sacrament he had received,

Mother Baptist goes on to say: "Our doctors don't like our taking these dying cases in, as it necessarily makes our death rate high; but what do we care for that? Many souls are saved, and they will pray for us."

Mother Baptist was not much more than a year at work in San Francisco before she was asked to send out a colony from her infant convent. The first branch house was Sacramento, then a part of the diocese of San Francisco. On the feast of St. Joseph, 1856, Archbishop Alemany, in honor of the saint, whose feast was that day celebrated, and still more in honor of the Blessed Sacrament from which the city took its name, begged that some Sisters might be sent to look after the neglected children of Sacramento. It was while accompanying her young Mother Superior thither, on her first visit of exploration before yielding to the Archbishop's entreaty, that the Venerable Mother de Sales caught the fatal malady mentioned towards the beginning of our narrative, which made her the protomartyr of the Californian Sisters of Mercy; for at that time the journey, which can now be made in three or four hours by rail, took a day and a night on the deck of a miserable steamer on the Sacramento River. A colony of five Sisters was led forth by Mother Baptist in October, 1857. In spite of many vicissitudes and even catastrophes, the Sisters have carried on successfully their various works of mercy for more than forty years. The community, perhaps reluctantly, became independent of the Mother House when, in a rearrangement of the ecclesiastical geography of the Pacific Slope, Sacramento was taken from San Francisco and joined to Grass Valley. It has superseded the latter

in giving its own name to the See now occupied by Dr. Thomas Grace, who lately succeeded Dr. Manogue, himself the successor of Bishop O'Connell, the first Bishop of Grass Valley—all Irishmen, like their metropolitan, the Most Rev. Patrick William Riordan, Archbishop of San Francisco.

The first offshoot that was independent from the start was the convent of Grass Valley. Our account of this foundation will be confined to a letter of Mother Baptist's which we shall give nearly in full, though it touches on several other topics besides our present point. We trust that the passage about the Retreats will not vanish in passing through the press as some similar passages have done; for such things illustrate one of Mother Baptist's favorite virtues, gratitude. The letter is dated "Convent of Our Lady of Mercy, Grass Valley, Nevada County, California, September 20th, 1868," the eve of St. Matthew.

"To-morrow being the feast of your holy patron and not claimed by any one nearer or dearer than yourself, you shall get all my days' doings, good and bad, and I trust the former may predominate. It seems to me it is unusually long since you wrote, but I believe the Retreat season is a busy one with you. It would astonish you the number of Retreats your Fathers here are called on to conduct. The late Provincial, Father Congiati, told us more than once that whatever community might be disappointed we never would, and you must know we require three, two for the Sisters and one for the penitents. You recollect Father Raffo; he gave our first Retreat this year, Father Calzia the second, and Father Neri the one for the penitents. We say truly the Jesuits are the greatest

blessing we enjoy in California. God bless them everywhere.

"I have given you above my present address in full, not that I expect you to send your reply to this place. I came here this day three weeks and hope to leave this day week. My throat was somehow a little troublesome, and the doctor said a short time in this pine district would be beneficial, and so it has, thank God, both to me and my two companions, Mother Mary Gabriel and a young professed Sister who claims your holy founder for her patron. This is a real primitive country place and we can do here what would be unusual elsewhere. For instance, we three, and three of the Grass Valley Sisters, went on Monday morning after breakfast out at the rear gate at the Boys' Asylum and in five minutes found ourselves in a primeval pine forest through which we wandered *ad libitum* a few hours, resting occasionally and not meeting a living creature save a few cows with bells on their necks and some birds, lizards, and such like. The morning was cloudy, for which reason it was selected, as usually at this season the sun is very hot. We were not home over an hour when loud rolling thunder was heard and plenty of lightning also, soon followed by heavy rain, which was welcomed by every one and has made the country sweet and fresh since.

"Though thirty-four years in California, it is only this week I saw a mine. You may be sure we did not descend the shafts, but we saw the cages ascending and descending with men and rocks, and saw the whole process required for getting the gold from first to last; and surely it is no wonder it is valuable, for it costs great labor. The process would be too tedious

for me to explain in writing, but truly it is interesting. Some sad accidents occur. The employed are obliged to change their clothes before leaving the building, and are examined, fearing they might secrete valuable specimens ; and to the honor of our holy Faith it is a fact that never yet did a Catholic attempt such a thing, though that cannot be said of Cornishmen. Yet the latter get the preference, the present proprietors being nearly all Protestants. The two mines we visited are the Idaho and North Star ; the former goes a perpendicular depth of 1600 feet, the latter goes only a depth of 600 feet, but runs over 1800 feet, following the ledge of gold-bearing quartz. There is in each a machine for forcing fresh air into the mine. I am bringing several specimens to our cabinet.

"Now I must tell you about this establishment, which was our first filiation. It is twenty-five years since it was started, a mere mustard seed ; now it is a large institution, including an asylum for orphan and half-orphan boys (about eighty-five in number), one for young orphan and half-orphan girls, and a third for the more grown girls, amongst whom are the children of families living in remote districts where no good schools are to be found ; the girls in both mount up to pretty nearly two hundred. Ground is not so valuable here as in the city, so they are not stinted. It would delight you to see the boys chasing each other through the pines, or playing ball, etc. The whole enclosure of six or seven acres is left free to them. The Sisters find it costs less to buy fruit and vegetables than to cultivate them."

We need not give the rest of the letter except this



ST. JOSEPH'S CONVENT, SACRAMENTO.



CONVENT OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES, EAST OAKLAND, CAL.

phrase: "I was told lately I look as young as I did twenty years ago. The truth is I never looked young."

Other California centres of activity for the ubiquitous and indefatigable Sisters of Mercy have been established at Rio Vista, Ukiah, Red Bluff, Eureka, Los Angeles and San Diego, but not directly by her whom we have called the Pioneer Sister of Mercy in California. In San Francisco itself, however, and its vicinity she founded several distinct institutions which with God's blessing will continue to do each its own beneficent work, on through the twentieth century and beyond it. It is a blessed thing to have any part in the foundation and maintenance of good works of this stable and permanent kind. What a magnificent alms to suffering humanity! Such benefactors of their fellow-creatures, such co-operators with their merciful Creator, must for all eternity have a glorious share in the promise, "*Their works follow them*," especially when that text is amplified by the dictum of human wisdom, *Qui facit per alios facit per se.* In this sense Mother Baptist's work goes on.

At the request of the Rev. William Gleeson the Sisters opened a school at East Oakland (then known as Brooklyn) July 2, 1877. Some eight years later an addition was built for the accommodation of boarders in Our Lady of Lourdes Academy. Here and in the other schools there are flourishing Sodalities of the Children of Mary, etc. In San Francisco they have large schools at St. Peter's, Alabama Street; Our Lady's Home for Aged and Infirm, Rincon Place, with some 130 inmates, and adjoining this house the Mater Misericordiæ Institution where young girls

and servants out of employment are taken care of. The Magdalen Asylum in Potrero Avenue has saved and sanctified many a sorely tried and tempted soul through all these years, as it will (please God) through each year of the coming century or centuries.

From the Mother House itself, St. Mary's Hospital, the Sisters go out to visit the jails, House of Correction, City Hospital, and also the sick of their own houses. And besides the blessed routine of these organized ministrations of charity they have always been ready to lend their aid in meeting sudden emergencies of disease or want not unknown even in that favored region. Thus in a letter of February 6, 1894, Mother Baptist writes to her sister in Newry:

"There is great distress among the working classes here and everywhere. About five hundred men are coming daily for something to eat. We give them coffee and bread. We have twelve dozen tin cups; when these are served out they are dipped into a pail of water and used again. The poor men stand in the open air in a long line, two abreast, and we hand the coffee and portion of bread out of the window. It is considerable work serving so many, but we are thankful that we are able to do it. Of course, we get help. A poor young man hired a room last week in Third Street, and, after cutting off all marks from his clothes and destroying all papers and anything that could identify him, shot himself, leaving in writing that he did it rather than beg, and he could get no employment. I trust we may be the means of preventing such an act. But workmen and tradesmen are not provident; they spend every cent they earn on dress

and amusements beyond their rank in life". [And then the drink! the drink!]

The Home for the Aged on Rincon Place did not satisfy the zeal of the foundress. Her darling project of a separate and adequately equipped institution for this object, on which her heart was set, was never to be realized in her lifetime. Her correspondence through a full score of years is full of allusions to her hopes and plans. For instance, we see in the following letter how far she had gone towards realizing her designs as early as the year 1881; and this helps us to understand her bitter disappointment at not being able to begin the building during the many years she was still to live. This letter was written to a lady who had been obliged to take a situation as a governess in a Protestant family in some very out of the-way part of the country. As there are some characteristic touches in other parts of the letter, we print it almost in full. It was a fine act of charity to write thus at length to a poor lonely lady among strangers, one who seems to have been known to Mother Baptist only through having appealed for her temporary hospitality while out of employment before this undesirable situation was offered to her.

June 26, 1881.

My Dear Miss ———:

Your big letter was received on the morning of the 23d. I kept it until evening, when M. M. G. and I sat down and enjoyed it together. I say enjoyed, though we sympathize with you in your hard trials, and more than once tears were in Mother's eyes. I did not think such bigotry existed, but she tells me it is not much better in her part of Humboldt County. It

arises from ignorance, and, when Catholics become more numerous, it will gradually disappear. But you have found a haven at last. The tender thoughtfulness displayed by placing all the Catholic books and pictures in your room was the only point that touched the soft spot in my heart. I pray God to bless your newly found friends. What inducement have people to settle in such a country as you describe, or how did they find out such a place? Truly this puzzles me.

Your description of your horseback ride adventures reminded me of myself. My dear old father (the Lord be merciful to him!) considered riding a part of our necessary training, and when mere children we began on a donkey, but I never had courage to go farther; so when the other girls were sporting on horseback, the quiet donkey did for me, and the quieter he went the better I was pleased, as I always had a book open before me. At last one day the poor brute got tired of my listlessness, and down it lay and I on its back. My poor father saw me in the distance, and when I got home said he supposed I had better give up riding, and so I did, and I am sure I would make a greater fuss than you did if obliged now to try it.

You say little of your eyes. I am so glad that you have so kind an amanuensis as Miss G. It will be one of the most improving exercises you can prescribe, so beg her to write as often as she can, and it will save your poor eyes. We did wonder we were not hearing from you. I hope you got the few letters we sent.

You will be glad to hear Sister M. Francis is busy about the new home; not exactly the building, but preparing the ground and the plans. She has over thirty-men grading for over six weeks, and probably six more will not see all finished.

We are rejoicing at one great blessing God has accorded her—a good well. Two weeks ago the men struck a good

vein of water at 136 feet depth. All the money you send I will lay up to secure you a home in the new building, so that you will feel independent. I often told you we did not hold you accountable for the time that you were here, except that you are bound to pray fervently for God's blessing on us all.

When there are so few Catholics in your part of the world, you have, of course, no priest and no sacrifice. How I pity you! But God is everywhere, and you are doing what seems to be your duty in the order of Providence. I will hereafter send you a *Monitor* as often as I can, or some Catholic paper. I see you get other papers with political news.

No mention is made in my family letters of my brother's being made successor to Forster, but unless it was a certainty they would not mention such a thing. I am far indeed from wishing it for him; but, as God elevated Esther to the throne for the good of others and not for her own benefit, so it may be the Divine Will to make use of my poor brother for some wise end, and if so, provided he is true to God, all will go well. So far, mixing with the world has not lessened his fidelity to his religious duties, thank God! but pray for him. He is only 49 this October, and he has ten children.

Now I have dashed this off in double quick time, so your dear pupils must not take this as a pattern to imitate.

Ever yours in Jesus Christ,

Sr. M. B. Russell,

Sister of Mercy.

The ground, however, on which Mother Mary Francis Benson had those men employed for six weeks was for some reason pronounced unsuitable for the site of the new Home, though some progress seems to have been

made, for in the following year (April 13, 1882) Mother Baptist writes to the same correspondent :

"The work on the new Home is stopped for lack of funds. In God's own time it will get on."

But God seems sometimes to our impatience and ignorance to work very slowly, and, when eleven years had gone by, Mother Baptist wrote to her sister, Mother Emmanuel, August 2, 1893 :

"I told you some time ago about a lovely spot we had set our hearts on for the Home, Peralta Park. Well, the Archbishop did not approve of it, so we gave it up. The location was grand—such a fine view of the bay, Golden Gate, Yerba Buena and Alcatras Islands, etc., etc. This very thing, however, was objectionable, as it thus gets the full benefit of the winds and fogs ; but it so happened that we went on an exceptionally lovely day. We have since bought five acres in Fruitvale, a suburb of East Oakland, and intend, please God, to build there in time. Our reasons for selecting this place are, first, the climate, which is mild, and, secondly and principally, we are within a few hundred feet of a church belonging to the Franciscan Fathers, where our old people can have the advantage of numberless Novenas and devotions of all kinds. Besides, religious priests are usually more numerous than secular priests, so we are not likely to have any difficulty about securing daily Mass, paying a certain amount annually, of course. Until we dispose of the property we purchased so long ago for the Home in this city, we cannot think of building, and at present everything here is not dull, but dead. Crowds of people are out of employment, and several of the banks are closed."

Again, after more than two years, she writes to the compiler of these notes, December 7, 1895 :

"Business of every kind is depressed and taxes are extra heavy; so, contrary to our expectations, we are

getting no contributions to the Building Fund of the new Home. We are consequently resting on our oars for the present. When I hear of the amount expended for useless decorations, as at young Mackay's funeral and at Miss Vanderbilt's wedding, I am half provoked. At the last 120,000 dollars' worth of cut flowers. It is almost incredible, but even here 500 dollars for a pall of violets has been paid more than once. We are in Calafornia 41 years to-morrow, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and the day Pius IX proclaimed it a dogma of our Faith. Dear old Mother de Sales threw a miraculous medal into the mud as we drove from the steamer to St. Patrick's Church and begged our Blessed Lady to take us under her protection; and no doubt she preserved us from many dangers, notwithstanding our shortcomings. Ask her to help us now to finish the Home; it is too long on the Hospital premises for the good of either institution, and I could wish (if God's will) to see the new and permanent building erected before I retire from work, and you know my years cannot be many. So, pray, and God bless you."

We have given considerable space to this holy project which has not even yet been realized; because it claimed a large share of the prayers, hopes and aspirations of many of Mother Baptist's late years. She loved the old people, no matter how disagreeable they were or how crotchety. She always found excuses for them, and whenever she had time, she visited them and read for them. The notes that we are here following add that she never worried over money matters, and always said that God would provide for His own; and so He did. She had such faith in public prayers or prayers in common that she never missed an opportunity of being present at the commu-

nity exercises. "The only thing for which I ever heard her express regret (says one of her Sisters) was for not being able to build the Home."

Our last reference to this subject will be a note furnished by another of the Sisters, from which we will not omit the opening sentences, although they are here irrelevant:

"Being asked on what she made her particular examen, she answered, 'On the presence of God; Father Maraschi, S. J., told me to make it on this twenty years ago.' God was indeed present with her at all times and in all places. In her exterior devotions nothing out of the ordinary was apparent. She always looked on the call of duty as God's voice, and it became her prayer. Nothing could disturb her peace of mind, for she had implicit confidence in Divine Providence; every occurrence, pleasant or unpleasant, was gratefully received and treasured because it was His will. How she did long to see the Home for Old People erected! For years she had been planning, etc., about it. A few years ago she purchased a very large 'Crucifixion' and several other pictures to help on a poor artist—also a stained-glass window, to assist another poor artist; and all these and many more things she had stored away to adorn the chapel of this Home. Never will I forget the expression on her face the day (a few days after she was stricken down with her last illness) that the Archbishop visited her. He had promised some time before to call and come to some decision about proceeding with the building. She had been daily expecting him. Her speech was gone, but she was perfectly conscious and showed how pleased she was to see him;

but I imagined I could read in her face, 'Ah, you come too late. I cannot talk with you now.' After he left the room, she raised her hands upward and with her eyes expressed perfect resignation."

The last work of the kind that the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy in California was just barely allowed to finish was St. Hilary's Sanitarium. The well-being of this wretched tenement of clay, which the soul inhabits, has a marvellous share in the efficiency of God's poor human creatures. Mother Baptist had for many years felt the necessity of having a place outside the city, and yet easily accessible, to which she might send the Sisters that needed a few days' rest and change of air after their long confinement in the hospital wards and closely-packed schoolrooms. Dr. Benjamin Lyford, a distinguished physician, who had for some years given up the practice of his profession, owned an extensive estate in Marin County, along the shore of an inlet of San Francisco Bay, from which he generously invited Mother Baptist to select a portion suited for her purpose. He even pressed her to come at once (it was the summer of 1897) and occupy with some of the Sisters one of his cottages, so that she might on the spot judge of the climate, etc., and might then, if satisfied, choose her own lot, which he would give for nothing. Accordingly she writes to Sister Mary Euphrasia from Bay View Cottage an idyllic epistle, reporting that "Sister M. B. is enraptured with this place, and truly for a summer resort for the Sisters, I doubt if it could be equalled. Not a sound but a cawing of the crows morning and evening. Yesterday a rabbit or a hare came into the kitchen, and, as we were sitting in the front last evening, a

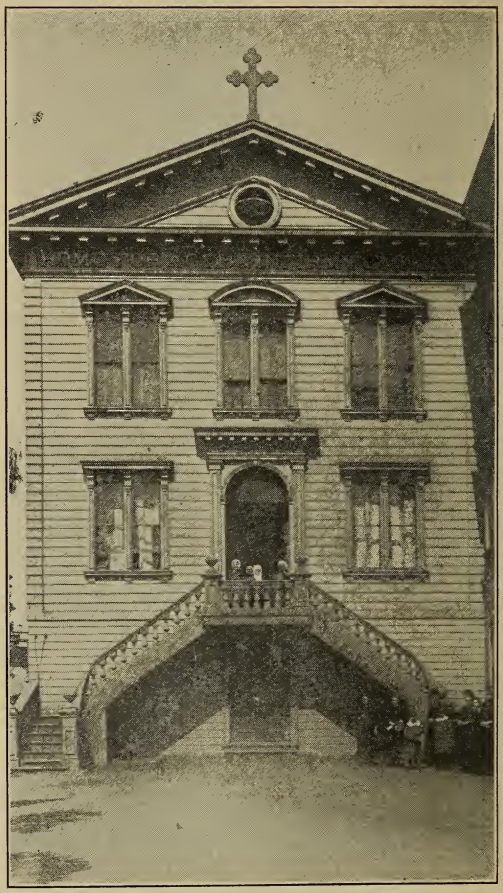
whole family of quail walked down the road within fifty feet of us. If we were only any way smart, we could trap plenty of game while here." It is a quiet retired spot, free from fog and malaria, the air balmy and yet invigorating. It commands a magnificent view of the bay with San Francisco in the distance. Mother Baptist commenced a comfortable little convent, which she called St. Hilary's, because "Hilarita" was Mrs. Lyford's name. Mr. Gilmour, the contractor for the work, was a Protestant; but before his contract was completed, he had expressed a desire to be instructed in the Catholic faith and is now a good practical Catholic. Let us pray that the same grace may be granted to the generous donor of St. Hilary's.

Sister Rose writes on the 20th of November, 1898: "Just think! After all Mother Baptist's preparation of the new house she never slept one night in it." When all was ready the message came from a brighter and a fairer home: *Omnia parata sunt, veni ad nuptias.* After she was taken away, her mourning daughters were in no hurry about the blessing of St. Hilary's, which did not take place till May 13, 1899. Father Valentini, the Rector of Sausalito, recalled in his sermon that thirty years before he had met Mother Baptist in the pest house, where she and Sister Mary Stanislaus and others, all gone to their reward, were nursing the smallpox patients, and he exhorted the listeners, her spiritual children, to strive to copy her virtues, especially her charity, her humility, her zeal, her peaceful calm, her meekness and forgivingness, and her firm trust in Divine Providence.

We must now begin to think of bringing our story to an end, though we have made very inadequate use



ST. HILARY'S SANITARIUM.



OLD WOMEN'S HOME, SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

of the materials placed at our disposal. Besides the long European letters, we have had the privilege of reading many of the shorter and more scrappy and gossipy notes that were sent from one to another of the houses in California. In all these the writer's prudence and charity shine forth, her kindness and thoughtfulness, her desire to help every one who needed help of any kind.

Her habit of commending her friends' necessities to the compassionate heart of the Mother of Sorrows is thus referred to in a letter to a friend in Ireland. She writes :—"It may please you to know that one of my constant practices is to recommend all my dear ones to our Lady of Dolours earnestly every day, and generally by name ; and certainly you and yours are never forgotten. We have a life-size painting of the Crucifixion over our altar, with our Blessed Lady and St. John. The Madonna is very beautiful, and it is to her specially I pray for you all, and for some other anxious mothers, whom I promised to pray for."

The following is a testimony paid by one of the Californian Sisters of Mercy to the virtues of her beloved Mother :

"Her knowledge of Scripture and of the Lives of the Saints, and indeed all her spiritual knowledge was very great. Her instructions were exceedingly practical and it is certain she always practised what she preached. She was generally one of the first in the Chapel in the morning and one of the last to leave it at night. When duty or charity did not detain her she was without fail at all the common exercises of the community. I never heard her say, 'I had not time to finish my prayers;' they were

always said at the right time. Her spirit of prayer was wonderful; she lived and moved in and for God. It required no effort for her to speak of Him; she seemed always recollected.

"In 1881 we celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the Order. Early in that year she wrote to the different houses of the order for statistics of the different houses, of their works, members, etc. She intended having them all collected and had printed headings of the different works of the Institute. These she intended to be collected and bound and to send a copy to the parent house, Baggot Street, Dublin, and also to the principal houses of the Order.

"Mother was willing to bear all the expense and take all the trouble solely for the good of the Order. She loved everything connected with it and revered the Institute. She was in every sense a true Sister of Mercy.

"Her respect for priests was profound; many a needy one she helped substantially. She always spoke of and to them with reverence. She never resented an injury, nor would she ever allude to a slight that she had received. She possessed a spirit of labor; no work was too menial for her. I often saw her scrub, wash windows and help those who seemed extra busy. I never heard her command; if she wanted something done or wished one to go on the visitation, it was, 'Could you do so and so for me?' or 'Would it be convenient for you to come out with me?' etc.

"Many a time she called the writer and whispered, 'The Lord loveth the cheerful giver,' if she would see in the face a shade of worry or perhaps a clouded brow or a slight frown. How she pitied the relapsing

sinner or the one who failed despite many resolutions! Her advice was, 'Rise again no matter how often you fall.' 'If a child in running falls, it does not lie on the ground, but arises quickly and goes on again until it reaches its destination. So we must do likewise,' she frequently said.

"When she did a kindness for any one, or helped one in any way, she would never mention it, nor would she wish any one to allude to it. To the poor she was more than generous, especially to those who had seen better days. To such her offering was always placed in an envelope, which she would slip into their hands when saying 'Good-bye,' showing the refinement of her generous heart. She frequently said that God never let her feel the loss of the charities she dispensed; and these were incessant and (considering her resources and her needs) very great. She could not refuse any one who asked her for charity, or see any one needing food, clothing, etc. She would deprive herself of necessaries. On many occasions she took off her underskirt to give it to some poor creature, and she would take from her wardrobe the garments meant for her use. No matter how badly any one treated her or how ungrateful persons were, she never resented nor spoke ill of them; in fact, I never heard her speak in the least uncharitably of any one, nor show by her manner that she resented. All did not act towards her as she did to them. Rev. Mother was always planning pleasures for her spiritual children. She was always anxious to relieve and to make their occupations light. She never asked any one to do what she was not most willing to perform herself. I never heard her express a wish that

she would like this or that with regard to food, clothing, etc. Very many times I asked her when she was ailing at any time if there was not something she would desire. 'No, dear, I have everything I wish.' I often said: 'Why, Mother, you will spoil those who attend to your wants. You never give an order; you do not tell them to make your bed so and so.' She would answer, with an endearing smile: 'How can I, when everything is done so willingly and well?' Yes, she thought every one was good, like herself. She often said that we ought to feel a pleasure in being forgotten or overlooked by others. She never raised her voice; her tone in speaking was low but very distinct. Her manner of reading was charming; one would never tire listening. In reading of the sufferings of others she would always shed tears. Many a time when she would commence some touching part I would say, 'Now, Rev. Mother, please take out your handkerchief to catch the tears.' . . . She loved Ireland with a deep, ardent and undying love.''

CHAPTER XIII.

LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.

And now for the great act of dying. Death did not come as an abrupt surprise for our Pioneer Sister of Mercy in California. Every day of her life, we might say truly, had been not only implicitly, but explicitly, a preparation for death. Her letters are full of allusions to death ; nothing austere or melancholy, but very cheerful, though very serious. She made herself at home with the thought of death : for, like the "Great Good Man" of Coleridge's fifteen-line sonnet, she had

> "——three treasures, life and light
> And calm thoughts equable as infant's breath,
> And three fast friends, surer than day or night,
> Herself, her Maker, and the Angel Death."

In Mother Baptist's letters there are many descriptions of death-beds of various Sisters, some details of which have a pathetic interest for those who know what her own death was to be.

When some of the community were proposing plans for a certain Sister's Silver Jubilee, still at some distance in the future, their Reverend Mother wrote what might have been written of herself nine years

after : " Certainly we will do every thing in our power to honor the day when it comes ; but who can tell how many of us will then be in the land of the living ? Let us learn a lesson from our poor dear Sister now lying in the infirmary. (She began her letter by saying, "Our dear, kind-hearted, devoted Sister Mary Agnes is to all appearances near death.") Not a prayer can she say, not a look can she cast on her crucifix. Even when Father Prelato called and tried to rouse her to consciousness, she could give no sign that she had even heard him, though it is possible she may know what is going on. She has not opened her eyes since she was anointed. It is indeed little we can do when dying. I will send you a few lines each day as long as she is in this precarious state."

June 5, 1888, was the Golden Jubilee of Sister Mary Bernard Hamill, the fiftieth anniversary of her profession in St. Clare's Convent, Newry. Writing to her before that epoch, her god-child says : " The year 1901, if I ever see it, will be my Golden Jubilee. But I don't expect to live so long, nor do I wish it, either ; in fact, I wish for nothing, knowing that the very thing I might be naturally inclined to desire may be the least desirable for me, so I have no wishes whatever, except to be a good religious, and for that I beg your prayers always. May God graciously hear all the prayers offered for you on your Golden Jubilee, and may eternity be for you one long jubilee of love and praise."

Writing in anticipation of another Golden Jubilee—that of Mother Gertrude, of Kinsale—she refers to her own. " You know I will be fifty years in religion next November, if I live so long. Dear Mother

Gabriel and others wanted me to celebrate my Golden Jubilee then, but I objected. I think they feared I might not live for my jubilee of profession ; but if I do not, I will, please God, be sooner in heaven. Though life is precarious, and I am perfectly indifferent on that point, I am inclined to think I will see August 2, 1901, which will be my Golden Jubilee."

This long letter, which we have not yet done with, ends with these words : "And now, once more, farewell, my ever dear Sister, until we meet in the everlasting jubilee of heaven." A strange expression coming after her allusion to the year 1901 ; but it was nearer the truth, for she was stricken down two or three weeks afterwards, and this seems to be the very last of her letters. This circumstance adds solemnity to the frequent references which it makes to death. "I intend sending you a sketch of our cemetery with the names of all our dear departed. Our dead form a goodly company.

"It seems to me we lose more in proportion to our number than any community I know—forty-five in not quite forty-four years—and the climate is good, proverbially pleasant, and we give them good food and plenty of it ; but the doctors have many times said that the air breathed in the schools, home and hospital was not the best, as we know very well ; but we rejoice at having now a quiet little spot by the seaside, where we can spend a week or two in turn during vacation, and have salt-water baths. I enjoyed it so myself in the early part of last summer ; but, as I got some serious or rather alarming attacks in the fall, no one will hear of my venturing near the water again."

Later on, in this same letter, she adds :

"One of the Sisters, seeing the dead the chief subject of my letter, remarked that it was scarcely a suitable subject for a jubilee letter, but I know you are like myself, thinking more of the dead than of the living, and among our dead are some very dear to you, so I think you will not object to all I have said.

"I must tell you about myself. I do not know whether you heard of the rather alarming attacks I had many times last fall and winter. They have almost disappeared, and, as I sleep well, eat well and am not allowed to do much, I am getting fat; but that does not make long life any more certain, as we see day after day; so I must try to be prepared, should God call me out of life suddenly. I therefore recommend myself earnestly to your prayers, and, as you are naturally expecting your summons before long, I will not fail to recommend you often to St. Joseph, the patron of a holy death. In our infirmary at the asylum we have a picture of that saint, with Our Lord on one side, and the Blessed Virgin on the other. No wonder he is invoked for that great and supreme blessing of a happy death.

"The last Sister we lost, Sister Mary Cecilia, was not long ill, about ten days, but very sick from the first. It was that fatal pneumonia that carried her off. When scarcely able to articulate, I could hear her repeating, though half raving :

"'O Mary, when I come to die,
Be thou, thy spouse and Jesus nigh.'

"Indeed, all our dear departed had enviable deaths, thank God ! I love to reflect on some of them, they were so especially holy and edifying."

What we may call Mother Baptist's special devotion to death was shown, most of all perhaps, in some letters addressed to her half-brother, Arthur Hamill, of whom mention was made towards the beginning of this sketch. He, himself, was very faithful to the memory of his deceased kindred and friends. When his youngest brother became a priest he would often say to him, "Remember the dead;" and, when All Souls' Day came round, he would draw up each year a list of those whom he wished to be commemorated at the altar. When he in his turn was lying on his death-bed his sister wrote of him, July 27, 1884:

"Why should we desire to retard his happy entrance to the kingdom of God? He has had a long life, being seventy last April, and has, I trust, earned for himself a happy eternity. Often since I saw something of the world I have reflected *with admiration* on what I recollect of Arthur, his wonderful respect and submission to mamma, his devotedness to *us* young ones, and the repeated journeys he took on Saturdays from Dundalk merely to spend the Sunday with us in our quiet old-fashioned home in Killowen, instead of enjoying himself with young people of his own age." Judge Hamill lingered so long that more than a year later Mother Baptist wrote the following letter, a strange one to send to a man of the world so much older than herself, that he had been appointed the guardian of her and her brothers and sisters on their father's death.

St. Mary's Hospital,
San Francisco, October 25, 1885.

My Dearest Arthur:—At first I thought I would not bother you with a letter, and so addressed dear Mary,

who will, I know, write to me in return; but now I am adding a few lines to yourself.

So death has sent you "three warnings" that he will call for you some day. Please God, you will not be found unprepared, and so you do not dread his approach. I met some time ago a few sweet lines on death which I would copy, could I now lay my hands on them; but the substance was that we should welcome death as an angel; for he alone shows us that *man is immortal, the soul can never die.* Still, being the penalty of sin, there is a certain solemnity about death that makes us naturally shrink from it, and it is this very fact that makes so pleasing to God our entire conformity to His holy will. Like every one, you feel, too, having to be separated from those you love; but this separation is only *for a time.* We will all, please God, be reunited in eternity. You willingly allowed Mary and the girls to go to Germany, etc,, etc., believing it was for their happiness and benefit, and looking forward to the pleasure of meeting them again. In like manner you and they must rather anticipate the happiness of being reunited in a blessed eternity than dwell on the necessary separation in time. You used to have rather too stringent ideas of the preparation required for Holy Communion, but you must lay that view aside and avail yourself of every opportunity of receiving Holy Communion and dwell, not so much on the infinite justice and sanctity of Our Divine Lord as on His infinite mercy and love. You have great advantages, dear Arthur, in such a city as Dublin, with dear Mary and Matthew to urge you on in the path of sanctity, and so many grateful, loving hearts praying for you continually. You won't object to my alluding thus to your death, though you are better, thank God, at present, and may be spared a few years. Yet, at your age, we know it must be only *a few;* and, as death is the only means by



ARTHUR HAMILL, Q.C.

which we can be united to God, never again to be separated, we should not shrink from it. [After some remarks of a less grave kind, she ends thus]: Another time I will write more, provided you are not *mad* with me for this production. I fear dear Mary will, but I am so familiar with death, I half imagine you must be the same. I pray for you every day, and I promise to pray for you more and more. I must now stop. Ever, dearest Arthur, your fondly attached and affectionate sister,

MARY B. RUSSELL,
Sister of Mercy.

Mother Baptist, before posting this letter, showed it to an aged kinswoman whom she cherished tenderly in her last days. "She says it was a terrible letter to send to a sick man, so I added a postscript, telling her to use her own judgment about giving it or not. We are so habituated to the thought of death that it has lost its terror for us; but, as cousin Kate says, it is different with seculars."

Ten years before, she had given a description of the little cemetery where she was herself to be buried, in the course of a letter of eight huge foolscap pages to "My dear Arthur and Mary," dated February 8, 1874. After speaking of two deceased friends she goes on: "May God have mercy on them all! Is it in Glasnevin you have your two darlings laid? It is nicely kept; but the poor old graveyard in Newry, though a sanctified spot, was desolate-looking in the extreme. Here the cemeteries are laid out with walks and trees, and are cheerful-looking; but in general there is too much gingerbread-show about the tombs, etc., for my taste. I wish you could see our sweet little cemetery; it is at the Magdalen Asylum where

we have seven acres of ground. We keep the cemetery green by constant irrigation; without this it would be parched by the long dry seasons and fresh breezes that keep our summers so cool. We have eight sisters already laid in their narrow homes and four or five of the penitents. *They* have one-half appropriated to themselves, but only those who make their consecration for life are buried there; the others are interred in the common cemetery. We have in it a small mortuary chapel in which some of the penitents say the Office for the Dead on the first Sunday in each month and in which is a mock coffin with a skeleton (drawing), on top, appropriate pictures and mottoes, as the dead Christ, death of St. Joseph and St. Patrick. All these little things help and interest the inmates whose *world* is limited by the enclosure and for whom we have to provide every little comfort in our power. You would wonder how holy some of them are, but of course it is the smallest number."

Like very many of the saints and others whom God has asked to do great works for Him, Mary Baptist Russell was blessed with a very robust constitution. She had hardly the slightest interruption from ill-health till the last two years of her life. As far back, however, as December, 1888, she writes to her sister: "I fear Sister Mary Francis's letter may make you more or less anxious about my health; so I will tell you I have since had an examination, and it is found that the first opinion given by the doctor was not correct. My case is not so serious as he feared, and in the course of a month or so I will, please God, be all right. But he keeps me lying either on a lounge or

in bed, and has ordered me lots of good things to take, even meat on Fridays! *So my day has come.*"

But her day of life lasted ten years more. On the 17th of January, 1898, she reports of herself: "At present I am very well; but, as those attacks have come back unexpectedly, I cannot say I am all right. If it be God's will, I should like much to build the Home next summer. Pray for this intention." And ten days later: "I shall be sixty-nine in April. My health has been shaky all last year, and I may say I did nothing during that time but rest and nurse myself. *Now*, thank God, I feel well, and hope to continue so for a few years with the blessing of God." As near to the end as June 28, 1898, she writes to a friend: "You will be glad, I know, to hear that my health is as good as it was years ago." No letter of a later date than this has come into our hands. Her last letter home to her sister, Mother Emmanuel of Newry, is dated June 7, 1898: "Mother Austin Carroll says she has not one delicate Sister in her community of sixty! I envy her. We have many, and I head the list; but I am not suffering in any way. Yet, without any premonitory symptoms, I lose for an instant the power of my right side; and, as long as I am subject to such attacks I can't say I am *well.* Still I am stouter than ever, and no wonder—for I sleep well, eat well, and cannot go around as much as formerly. These symptoms ceased for several months, but have returned of late, though I still follow the doctor's regimen." The last words of this last letter are, "I am glad Mr. Fegan has acted so nobly"—namely, in giving at his sole expense to the Sisters of Mercy in Newry, such a Home for the Aged as Mother

Baptist had for years desired in San Francisco. However, I find that these last words are followed by a postscript which ends thus: "How grand the workhouses are getting! Nothing will do them but trained and certificated nurses. The world is changing; it must be coming to an end."

It was coming to an end for *her*. In July letters reached her friends in Ireland, which made her loving sister write thus: "I fear they expect her death. Well, she has served God and loved Him all her life, and we must not wish to keep her from her reward. We must bless and praise God for the great graces He has granted her through life; and He will surround her death-bed with them too. He is so good and generous to His faithful servants."

Sister Columba, after announcing Mother Baptist's dangerous state, exclaims: "What shall we do if the good God takes her? I cannot imagine this House and Community without her: she is its heart and its life. She was always ready to help us and make everything light and pleasant: and oh! her charity was really boundless. Her right hand did not know what her left hand did. No one ever saw her angry or impatient—always willing to forgive, no matter how often one had offended. Indeed, she was a faithful copy of our mild and loving Jesus. She lived and moved in and for God. Her charity and sympathy for the poor were unbounded. She always helped every one who applied to her. Her very last direction to me was to send some money to a leper settlement in Japan."

Another of her community (Sister Mary Aquin) writes on the 28th July, while they were still expect-

ing her death: "We have prayed hard that God would leave her with us a few years longer; but He wants her, and we must submit, however hard it may be to our poor hearts. She was a perfect model of every Christian virtue, but, above all, charity in word and deed. Her tongue, now silent forever in this world, never wounded any one, but was always ready to pour the balm of consolation into the wounded heart. How the poor will miss her! God alone knows what she has been to them during her long useful life." And two days later Mother Columba, her assistant then and soon to be her successor, sends her report to Mother Emmanuel: "Our dear Mother is still with us, but each day growing weaker. Her eyes are dark to this world. Ah! how much brightness she will gaze on for all eternity! She cannot see for the past few days. It is so sad not to hear her voice; and to know that she cannot hear us is inexpressibly sad."

Those lines of an anonymous American poem on the death of St. John the Evangelist were pathetically verified in the death-bed at which we are kneeling in spirit:

"E'en my lips
Refuse to form the words my heart sends forth,
My ears are dull; they scarcely hear the sobs
Of my dear children gathered round my couch;
My eyes so dim they cannot see the tears."

Not blind only, but dumb and deaf, the senses one after the other being dulled by that clogging of the arteries of the brain which was the immediate cause of death. Dumb and deaf and blind to creatures and to all outward things; but in her inmost heart, through

all those silent hours, doubtless the holy strain went on which had gone on uninterruptedly from her earliest conscious life and which will need little change in heaven. "God's will be done! My Jesus, mercy! My God, I love thee! Thanks be to God!"

And so with all the graces and consolations, sacramental and unsacramental, that can strengthen and gladden the last hours of a true Christian and a fervent religious, the dying nun passed through her tedious but seemingly painless dissolution. "Five weeks (all but one day) of living death." The great change came about seven o'clock in the evening of August 5th, and many of the Sisters stayed with her, praying; but she lingered through the night. A Dominican Father, who was a patient in the hospital, gave her the last absolution and said the prayers for the dying on his way to the altar to offer up Mass for her. He must have been in doubt whether her place was in the Memento of the Living or in the Memento of the Dead. Perhaps she died between the two and shared in both, for the soul passed away peacefully about twenty minutes after six o'clock in the morning of the Feast of the Transfiguration, August 6th, 1898, which was the seventieth year of her life on earth and the fiftieth of her life in the religious state. May she rest in peace, and may my last end be like to hers!

All the public journals of San Francisco, when Mother Baptist's illness showed fatal symptoms, gave minute accounts of her condition day by day, as of one in whom all their readers were interested. The announcement of her death in *The San Francisco Call*, begins with these words:

"No death in recent years has been heard of with

greater regret in this community than that of Mother Superior, Mary Baptist Russell, the sweet woman who watched over the destinies of various charitable institutions in this city during the past half century. The tidings of her calm leave-taking of this life will fill with sorrow the thousands who were fortunate enough to meet her and those who have heard or read of her beautiful deeds of charity since her advent in this State. A more lovable character than hers has been rarely found. Her constant aim in life has been to uplift the suffering and the wounded, and in this she was entirely successful."

The other secular journals, also, *The Chronicle*, *The Examiner*, etc., and, of course, the Catholic organ, *The San Francisco Monitor*, devoted several columns to a minute and enthusiastic appreciation of the life and labors of the humble religious. From Saturday to Tuesday thousands visited the convent chapel where she now lay in death, and where in life she had offered up so many holy prayers, made so many fervent Communions, and assisted with vivid faith and tender piety at so many Masses, often two or three in succession, even in the failing health of her last two years. It was remarked by many, that in her coffin she looked thirty years younger than she was. "The throng was so great," writes one of the nuns, "that we were really frightened — at least *I* was!" Hundreds touched the precious remains with medals, crosses, etc. The scene might remind us of what we read of many of the saints, among populations more impressionable than the shrewd and worldly inhabitants of an American commercial city like the metropolis of the West.

On the day of the funeral, the Archbishop of San Francisco, Dr. P. W. Riordan, celebrated the solemn Requiem Mass in the presence of some fifty of his priests, and as many of his people as the convent chapel could contain, not one-tenth of the crowds that sought admittance. Two hours before the obsequies it was impossible to get near the chapel.

"No dead sovereign," said *The San Francisco Chronicle* (a non-Catholic journal), "ever had prouder burial than Mother Mary Baptist Russell, whose life of self-denial and good works has crowned her in a city's memory."

The farewell words were spoken by the Rev. Hugh Gallagher, S.J., nephew of the good priest who had conducted her to the distant sphere of her labors fifty years before. Her body was then borne to the cemetery attached to her beloved Magdalen Asylum, amidst a crowd that (according to the journalist last quoted) "swelled to such immense proportions that the utmost efforts of the police were barely sufficient to hold it in restraint." An eye-witness states that, when the burial rites were finished, and the crowds had melted away, many still lingered on, more inclined to pray to than for the departed; and persons of all creeds (this circumstance is mentioned expressly) and of different degrees of social standing carried home with them handfuls of clay from the newly-made grave.

The spot in which that grave was made has been lovingly described for us by Mother Baptist herself, in a letter printed in a previous page. St. Michael's cemetery had always been a favorite haunt of hers, ever since it was blessed, May 8, 1867. The large



MEMORIAL CROSS, ST. MICHAEL'S CEMETERY.

Celtic cross, which she had long wished to erect as the crowning consecration of that little garden of graves, has been erected since her death, as a special memorial of the Foundress, and bears this inscription: "In Memory of Mother M. B. Russell, First Superior of the Sisters of Mercy, San Francisco. Born April 18, 1829. Entered Religion November 24, 1848. Professed August 2, 1851. Died August 6, 1898." Lower down above the base of the monument is this text from Proverbs xxxi., 20: "She has opened her hand to the needy and has stretched out her hands to the poor." A good text surely to place over our "valiant woman," who not only opened her right hand to give alms to those in want, but who, when the sick and suffering presented themselves, stretched out both her hands, opened wide her arms to embrace them, to cherish them, to nurse them back to health, while using a quiet and prudent zeal for the health of their souls.

Perhaps Mother Baptist's memorial cross might have borne a second text alluding to her other overmastering passion, supernatural love for little children, especially when poor and destitute. A saint, whose name she bore from the baptismal font—though I think she looked more to St. Catherine of Siena, as her patron—St. Catherine, of Genoa, complained once to her Divine Spouse: "Lord, You bid me to love others, and I can love only *You*." "Catherine, he who loves Me loves those whom I love." Christ's favorites are little children and the poor; and these also were objects of predilection for His handmaid, Katherine Russell. "Reverend Mother," writes one of the Sisters, "was the children's best and dearest

friend. She made it a point to answer all their letters. When hardly able to go, she insisted on being present at the Monthly Roll of Honor."

I have striven to make this account of a holy and useful life as much as possible a mosaic of testimonies more impartial than a brother's could claim to be. And, therefore, I will now bring it to an end by taking a phrase or two from various letters written after her death, both by those who knew her intimately within or without the walls of her convent, and by those who were almost strangers to her.

The one who was nearest to her by birth and likeness of disposition and vocation, though far separated from her by that sublime vocation through much the greater part of their lives, wrote a fortnight after the cablegram had brought us the news of her death: "Glory be to God, He enabled her to do great things for Him, and the purifying five weeks—powerless, speechless, blind—I trust have left little for the merciful fires of purgatory to do." On the 6th of November following, one of her own Community writes: "To-day is the third Month's Mind of Reverend Mother's death, and it seems like years since she was with us. I am sure she is happy in the company of her divine Spouse, whom she served so faithfully and is looking down upon us, and will obtain for us many favors."

And another, "Each day we miss our dear Mother more and more. Her illness seemed but a day, but since the funeral it seems years. I find myself saying: 'O my Mother, will you not intercede with the Sacred Heart for us?' Yes, we feel that she is now enjoying the vision of that God, whom she loved and served so

well. She was a saint, and the people revered her as such. During the days her remains were in the chapel thousands came to pay their last respects and to touch her with medals, beads, etc. . . . A few days ago I found a letter which our dear one wrote to me when I was in East Oakland, informing us that our dear Mother Mary Borgia was dying. In it she remarked: 'Once again we have the lesson—do what you can for your soul and eternity while you have health; when we are sick, we can do little, but we then show what *we are*.' I could not but reflect back on her own case. Yes, dear darling Mother showed what she was—the same calm, patient, submissive and resigned spirit she had always shown. She would take whatever we gave her, and by motioning with her eyes or hand show that she wished us to give part of what she was getting to any Sister who happened to be present. This was an old practice of hers."

The author of "Leaves from the Annals of the Sisters of Mercy," wrote to the author of these leaves as follows: "I have just read a description of the more than royal obsequies of your saintly and eminently charitable sister (may she rest in peace!) and my thoughts turn to you and your loved Mother Emmanuel in Newry as those who feel most keenly and grieve most deeply for the great loss we have all sustained in the death of our dearly loved Mother M. Baptist. For myself, I have no words to describe my grief. Humanly speaking, I could not have a greater loss. For almost two score years we loved each other in God, and interchanged thoughts and mutually sought of each other advice and direction in matters which all outsiders could not readily understand. I never knew

a more generous, charitable soul. A Sister of ours, who knew her in San Francisco, wrote to me from Pensacola: 'She was one of God's heroines. Her good acts go into the millions.' She is a great loss every way. Being the oldest religious in California as to residence, she was looked up to by all, and her example and influence for good were powerful."

Mr. Richard White, of San Francisco, brother of the late Dr. Dudley White, of Dublin, speaks of having attended the obsequies on August 9: "The last time I was in this chapel Mother Russell was with me, and I could not but think of something she then told me. One of the nuns was dying in the hospital, another nun of the same family had died a short time previously, and a surviving sister in the world had remarked: 'Well, that is the last of our family who will go into the Sisters of Mercy to die off in that manner;' and Mother Russell added: 'As if anything could be happier than such a death.' Dear Father, I wish I could describe to you how much Mother Russell was beloved by those who knew her, and how much she was respected by every one in the city. In over a quarter of a century that I have been in San Francisco no death of any one in religion has created the profound impression that the death of Mother Russell has done."

Mrs. Margaret Weston, of Philadelphia, seems to have seen Mother Baptist only in a passing way as a visitor from the East. "Though my acquaintance with her was so brief, I was more deeply impressed with the nobility, humility and loveliness of her character than I was ever before with any one whom I have met. She was so simply, genuinely good. How

sad it was to lose her presence and the wisdom of her counsel! May her mantle descend upon her successor, and may her Godlike charity and contempt of money be an inheritance among you."

I am not sure that the writer of the following, Dr. C. G. Kenyon, is a Catholic:

"I wish, in the strongest possible language, to express the feeling entertained by thousands of residents of this city of sympathy for the Sisters of your Community, for the loss they have suffered in the death of Mother Russell. During the period of three years that I occupied the position of Resident Physician of the Hospital, I was a witness to her great worth, not only as to her superiority in mental attainments, but in the Christian graces of charity and universal love for suffering humanity. During that time I acquired a feeling of reverence for her that time has not dimmed. Mother Russell was a tower of strength in this city, and her death is a public loss. I beg to intrude upon your sorrow at this time to offer this tribute to her memory."

Father R. E. Kenna, S. J., writes thus to Mother Columba: "I need not tell you how deeply I sympathize with the grief-stricken children of the good, gentle and great-hearted Mother Russell. She was a grand soul, and well worthy to be one of the pioneers of Holy Church in this western land. Gentle as a little child, she was brave and resolute as a Crusader. Prudence itself, yet she was fearless in doing good to the needy, and in advancing the interests of religion. All who met her were forced to admire; and those who knew her best loved her most. It was my happy lot to know her since 1864, and I had many dealings

with her ; and my admiration and profound esteem ever grew with the years. She was a saintly soul, with a wondrous allotment of common sense and practical zeal. We should thank Our Lord for giving to our young State such a wonderful example of religious virtue and heroic self-sacrifice."

A Paulist Father, the Rev. A. P. Doyle, writes: "I feel her loss as keenly as though she were of my own kith and kin, for she was associated with my earliest recollections of devoted religious work in San Francisco. There are few figures that stand out as prominently as hers in the history of the past forty years, and fewer still on whose bier are heaped the benedictions of the poor and unfortunate more abundantly than on hers. She goes down to her grave with the consciousness of having rounded out, in the fullest measure, years of usefulness for the Church and for poor humanity. She goes not unattended to her reward. A cloud of witnesses follow her to testify to her very great charity. It will be some consolation to her bereaved children to realize that though she is gone, her spirit still lives and will continue to make fruitful their lives."

Mrs. Mary A. O'Sullivan speaks of the tide of "sympathy that has been poured out by the whole city for the loss of the great, good Mother of the Poor, whom God has taken to her throne in heaven. Ah ! Sister, was there ever another like her, so gentle, so tender, so sympathetic, so big-hearted, so gay and light-hearted ? And that rich contralto voice, and those beautiful grey eyes ; 'tis sure we shall never look on her like again. And now she has left you all, sorrowing and lonesome. But, ah ! if we were good

Christians, 'tis singing canticles we ought to be that the Bride has gone to her Bridegroom, and is enjoying the happiness of heaven. Little did she have to atone for. Possibly she may have had to say, 'Lord, I loved the poor too much;' and inasmuch as He Himself became a fool through love, He will not have found it hard to forgive her."

Miss Harriet M. Skidmore, to whom the Catholic literature of America owes a volume marked by deep poetic feeling, pure taste and tender piety, paid her tribute to the memory of one of whom she says: "For many years I have been privileged to call her friend, and her death leaves in my heart (as in the almost numberless hearts to whom she was so wonderfully endeared) a sorrowful void that will never be filled until, by God's grace, we shall meet her in the Eternal Kingdom of His Love." Miss Skidmore calls her affectionate elegy *Mulier Fortis*, for she paraphrases the thirty-first chapter of Proverbs which is quoted on Mother Baptist's memorial cross.

The last witness I shall bring forward is another foundress, in even a stricter sense of that title. Mother Magdalen Taylor,[1] with the co-operation of the saintly and gifted Lady Georgiana Fullerton, has established many convents of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God, modeled (with modifications according to local wants) on an Institute founded in Poland by a holy layman, Edmund Bojanowski, who died in 1871. There are convents of this congregation in Rome, London, Blackburn, etc., and in Ireland, at

[1] Since the above lines were written Mother Magdalen Taylor has passed to her reward, on June 9th.

Carrigtwohill, at Loughlinstown Workhouse, and St. Joseph's Asylum for Aged Females in Portland Row, Dublin. Miss Taylor has published many pleasant and edifying books, beginning with a record of her experiences as an Anglican nurse during the war in the Crimea, at which time she was received into the Church by the Rev. William Ronan, S. J., who was acting as Army Chaplain. Hence the reference in her letter to her conversation with Mrs. Bridgeman at Scutari :

"How sorry I am you have lost your dear and good sister ! What a long life of excellence hers has been ! What a reward is hers for sacrifices made, souls gained, Our Lord loved ! I never met her, but I seemed always to know her from hearing so much about her. Mother Francis Bridgeman was never weary of the subject, and so I used to hear of her by the shores of the Bosphorus and in the garden of Kinsale. Your affectionate heart must feel the pang, but the sweet picture of her whole life will console you."

"We place Catherine McAuley in the first rank among foundresses ; unsurpassed by any of them in varied intelligence, in strong practical sense, in clear insight, and in what seems to us true heroic virtue." What Dr. Orestes Brownson said of Mother Mary Catherine I would dare, within due measure, to say of her daughter, Mary Baptist Russell. Though she did not found a new religious institute, she did part of the work and had many of the attributes of a model foundress, both in heart and head ; for both head and heart are needed in those who are called to band together their fellows in some heroic enterprise and so to merit in a transcendent degree the fulfilment of that

promise : "They who instruct many unto justice shall shine like stars for perpetual eternities." (Dan. xii., 3.) God alone knows how many souls have been and will be influenced by the gentle ministry of Mary Baptist Russell, Pioneer Sister of Mercy in California —how many have been drawn to God by her directly or indirectly, through her own efforts and prayers or through those who worked with her and those who will continue her work through the coming century or centuries. A life and character like hers might well convert an atheist from his hideous creed to a belief in goodness and heaven and God.

* * *

This sketch was begun at the suggestion of Mother Baptist's eldest brother, Lord Russell of Killowen, Chief Justice of England. I little thought that he would die before it was finished. On the 10th of August, 1900, he closed a life of great public utility and great private virtue by a most edifying Christian death, two years after his beloved sister. May they rest in peace.

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